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THE

MISSION OF DEATH;

A Tale

OF

THE NEW YORK PENAL LAWS.

BY

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PREFACE.

THE martyrdom of Father Ury, contained in the ensuing volume, and the penal laws enacted against the Catholic citizens of New York by Protestants, are facts in our history unknown to the mass of readers. These facts are gathered from the journals of the General Assembly of New York, and from Judge Smith's history of the Province. This learned and respected jurist indicates the spirit of Protestantism in his own day, when he declares the law, devoting to death every priest found within the borders, worthy of perpetual duration. Catholic princes possessed the semblance of justice when they persecuted their Protestant subjects, for they denied that

individuals possessed the right of determining religious dogmas for themselves; but Protestants had no such shelter from reproach, for they proclaimed perfect license for each man to believe anything or everything. Thus their persecutions of Catholics in Ireland, England, Scotland, France, Germany, and America assume the more fearful aspect of the hand committing acts which the lips at the same instant proclaimed to be outrageous.

THE MISSION OF DEATH

CHAPTER I.

The silver lamps of heaven were lighted one by one above the glistening spires of the provincial city; and as their increasing lustre dispelled the gloomy shades of night, distant sounds of festal merriment came swelling from the tranquil bosom of the bay, as if to accelerate the loitering footsteps of the tardy reveller. A frigate of the larger class lay moored far down the bay, while barges crowded with the loveliest and most distinguished citizens of the Colony were incessantly leaving the island of New York for the enchanting scene of pleasure and festivity on ship-board. The entertainment was given by the officers of the ship Queen Anne, to the

Lieutenant Governor and Council, a few evenings before the adjournment of the General Assembly, in November, 1739. Already the buoyant figures of the beautiful were floating through the mazes of the dance, but his Honor, George Clarke, had not yet appeared. However, his absence would in due time be accounted for, and the gay dancers sped merrily on.

Peerless amid the galaxy of beauty's children, glided the gentle Mary Sidney, the only child of an English Colonel, recently chosen a member of the Assembly. She was not classically beautiful, but the purity of her deep heart, and the nobility of her character overspreading her countenance and flooding her bright hazel eye, gave her such attractions as the Grecian profile seldom knows. The sensualist would pass her by, for a noble soul looked forth in each lineament and was the crown of her loveliness. So evident was this under-current of true beauty, that the minions of despotic fashion never dared to call Mary Sidney prudish, although her tasteful simplicity of dress seemed almost a libel upon their own modesty. She had withdrawn fatigued from the dance, and was sitting at the

extreme end of the long cabin in gay conversation with a circle of naval officers, when the expected Lieutenant Governor descended the hatchway, with a young lady upon his arm. He was accompanied by a young man of twenty-five summers, whose countenance was peculiarly intellectual and prepossessing. The Lieutenant Governor moved leisurely along the room, saluting the company with as much cordiality as comported with his elevated rank, and, finally, took his position near Mary Sidney, to receive the addresses of the parties as they came forward, and presented his companions as Agnes Clarke and Harry Clarke, Esq., his cousins.

It was soon whispered along the crowded apartments, that Mr. Clarke was a wealthy gentleman, recently arrived from England, and, with his sister, would reside at the house of the Lieutenant Governor. His relationship to the chief magistrate of the Province, and his reputed wealth, made Harry Clarke, Esq., at once the centre of attraction for the unmarried belles of this gay throng. But the unconscious object of these glances was entirely absorbed in conversation with the lovely Mary, and the young officers

observing her increasing interest in Clarke's manner, had sense enough to turn away to the more congenial dance.

"I fear you will find our city quite dull during the recess of the Assembly! Such gala nights as this are only oases in our monotonous life, said Mary.

"With that I shall be the better pleased," replied Clarke, "for this incessant dissipation seems not only foolish, but is quite irksome to me. I love rather to spend the long nights of winter in communion with the wise and noble of past ages, through the medium of books; for I discover there the same passions, pursuits, and disappointments as our own, and the same consciousness of immortality. I believe men run wildly after excitement and dissipation because calmness and retirement beget reflection, and reflection points toward duties long neglected, and men cannot look these in the face unmoved. How many, think you, of this merry crowd cast one true look of sympathy and aid toward those poor wretches who are dying from the pestilence which, they tell me, is sweeping the city?"

He spoke with feeling, and Mary Sidney had

caught something of his spirit as she replied, "I rejoice, sir, to have found you familiar with a thought which seldom disturbs these revellers. 'Tis indeed a noble duty to deny oneself and live for others. But," she added, with a smile, "we have conversed a half hour with the familiarity of old friends, and they are observing us; will you present me to your sister again? She will scarcely remember me among that swarm of introductions."

Agnes Clarke received Mary with the easy grace of one long familiar with the conventionalities of polished society. She had the same keen black eye as her brother, but, unlike him, the expression of her mouth varied with every passing feeling. When they stood side by side, the superior height of Mary was as manifest as their diverse schools of beauty; but through the incomprehensible mystery of nature they were as twin sisters in character and intellect.

But why does Mary start as if a viper crawled into view, and fix her eye in horror on the bosom of the young stranger? Reader! she saw suspended from the coral necklace of Agnes Clarke a glittering thing which suggested to the

mind of a provincial girl a name almost as fearful as the word *fiend!* Alas! the flashing symbol had disclosed a frightful tale—poor Agnes was a *papist!* What wonder, then, that Mary Sidney shuddered when she saw a fair young girl, of elevated rank, wearing beneath the blaze of a hundred lamps the emblem of disgrace, the unerring token of her league with Jesuits and criminals! Aye! it linked her closely to those who glided stealthily through loathsome alleys, and upon whose trail the bloodhounds of the law were never known to lag. It branded her with a name potent alike to stifle the cry of a child and make the judicial ermine tremble. She wore a symbol which glittered on the bosoms of two hundred millions of the human race, but against those myriads of beings had gone forth the disabling edict and the murderous law. And yet the forehead of the young girl seemed strangely like the brow of innocence, and the bearing of her brother resembled that of noble-hearted manhood.

Who had conjured up this demon of violence to make the noble and lovely rank with felons and outcasts? Did it emanate from those who

advocated one unerring principle of faith as comprehensible by the untutored intellect as by the brilliant genius? Alas! it was the inconsistent bitterness of those who deified the principle of private judgment! who had proclaimed to every man the infallibility of his own conclusions upon revealed truth as the rule of faith. But with all the powerful prejudices of her education and her horror of popish superstitions, Mary Sidney possessed a heart teeming with warmest sympathies, and when she saw fierce glances directed from every side at the poor girl's crucifix, her nobler nature obtained the mastery.

"Pardon me, Miss Clarke, my horror at this badge of your religion! it was cruel for me thus to meet one so far from home and among strangers."

"I do indeed forgive you, with all my heart, kind lady; but," she added, sadly, "she can well forget the stranger's look, who is an outcast from home and a disgrace to those who nursed her infancy."

"Are you indeed estranged from so dear friends? That must have been an awful crime

which could make a mother's heart grow cold toward her child!"

"Is it a crime to follow the impulse of principle and the convictions of inquiring reason? Is it a heinous sin to listen to the voice which speaks in answer to the lone agony of prayer? then am I doubly criminal; but," added Agnes, while her dark eye lighted with holy enthusiasm, "what care I for the scorn and cruelty of kindred when the very air is tremulous with flutter ing wings of angel friends!"

"I honor your sacrifice of social ties," said Mary, "if sincerity induced you to embrace a system which seems to me a fatal superstition; but you chose a poor refuge to enjoy your faith when you sought this Province. Do you not know there has been a law for many years condemning to perpetual imprisonment every priest seen in the Colony, and that the penalty of escaping from it is death? If your brother also is a papist, he can hold no place of trust or vote for any officer of government, and society will shun you both as a frightful pestilence; how, then, can you live here?"

"As my Master lived among the poor and

suffering. Oh! you have only told me how I may win a diadem! is this all the terror you can offer the papist girl?"

There was so much of earnestness in Agnes' manner, and her self-denying spirit realized so forcibly Mary Sidney's preconceived ideas of Christian virtue, that she staggered as to that part of her education which represented popish laymen as the deluded tools of designing ecclesiastics. She had never been brought in contact with Catholics of cultivated intellect, but had gleaned the vague notions of their tenets only from her simple-minded Indian maid, a convert of the Jesuits, or had imbibed them from the poisoned chalice presented from the desk sacred to truth. When, therefore, she encountered for the first time a person of rank and intelligence, a convert from her own faith, and that, too, at the expense of almost every earthly comfort, she was extremely interested in the strange phenomenon.

"And do you," she eagerly inquired, "feel so assured of the truth of your belief that your fear not to encounter the scorn and bitterness of men, and find true happiness in breathing the dangerous air of the frightful pestilence?"

"Oh, yes," replied Agnes, with the sweet smile so peculiar to her, "I can brave anything as a child of the holy Catholic Church with which the Eternal Word has promised to dwell all days."

"Come away from the popish tempter," muttered a deep voice close beside Mary Sidney. Starting aside quickly she met the cold grey eyes of the Reverend John Billman fixed sternly upon her. "Come away from her," he repeated in a louder tone, "she is the devil's own decoy."

He spoke so distinctly, that several gentlemen standing near caught his insulting words. But so strangely unrelenting was the prejudice against the Catholic that none volunteered to defend the young girl save a young naval officer, who, with the characteristic nobleness and intrepidity of the sailor, forced his way through the crowd. But he was anticipated by Harry Clarke, who bounded in an instant to Agnes' side, and drove the reverend defamer headlong into the bulkhead. The ball-room was instantly a scene of wild uproar, and amid the confusion were heard cries of "Down with the papists!" and the clear voice of the young officer shouting,

"No! no! down with insolence, and hurrah for Clarke!"

"What means this tumult?" said the Lieutenant Governor, pushing through the crowd. "Agnes, my child! why do you tremble so? Tell me, some one, what all this means?"

"I will tell your Honor," said Mary Sidney, drawing herself to her full height, while the flush of indignation mantled her cheek. "It was an unprovoked insult to a poor girl by that saintly man," pointing to the crouching figure of the Reverend John Billman, "and her brother, fortunately, was near enough to chastise him. I thank you, Frank, for your good intent," extending her hand to the young officer; "you have vindicated your character of a noble born gentleman. Come with me from this crowd, Miss Clarke," continued the high-souled Mary, leading her through the dividing mass to a retired seat in the after-cabin.

When the Lieutenant Governor had inquired the particulars of the affair, he turned with flashing eye to the minister, and demanded his explanation.

The Reverend John Billman replied, sullenly,

"I was fearful, your Honor, of the influence of popery on Colonel Sidney's daughter, and so I addressed her a timely admonition."

"Well, sir," replied the Honorable George Clarke, "your cloth does not authorize outrages upon young ladies whom I present here, when my hostility to popery is so well known, and my efforts to suppress it, as the deputy of His Majesty, have been carried to the extent of the law."

Turning to the officers of the vessel, he thanked them for the pleasure the entertainment had afforded, and regretting his unforeseen agency in marring the festivity departed with his relatives. The gayety at once ceased with his departure, and the guests shivering in the chill blasts of a November night returned homeward with far different emotions than at their advent.

CHAPTER II.

Contrary to the expectation of the gossips of the city, Harry Clarke, Esq., was not to reside with his cousin, the Lieutenant Governor. He designed to rent a house, and his sister was to act as his housekeeper. With little difficulty he discovered one suited to his purpose, in the upper part of the city; and though it made no great pretensions to architectural beauty, yet as it was newly built, and neat in appearance, he resolved to occupy it. It was considerably removed from any other building, and faced upon a common some eighty rods wide, on the opposite border of which stood the city prison. The ready money at his command enabled him to furnish it throughout in a few weeks, and the festival of Christmas found him ensconced in his new home, with his darling Agnes as his only companion. He had brought with him from England his servant John Bowers, a tall and sinewy fellow, who

acted in the joint capacity of coachman and waiter, and, with a Catholic girl, kindly presented by the Lieutenant Governor, constituted the domestic part of Clarke's establishment.

The fracas on board the ship Queen Anne, in which Harry Clarke had been so prominent an actor, only served to embitter the already fierce prejudice of the English and Dutch Presbyterians against papists and their abettors. The demure and submissive manner with which the Reverend John Billman, on the ensuing Sunday, alluded to his severe bruises, increased in the minds of his parishioners their high opinion of his sanctity and his uncompromising spirit of combatting the errors of the mystical Babylon. He assured his hearers, that notwithstanding a thick veil had fallen upon the moral sense of some in high places, so that they could no more discern the stealthy footsteps of the beast, but took to their bosoms the specious lure unconscious of the final sting, yet the people of the purer worship would at length prevail if they kept themselves unspotted from a religion of forms and ceremonies, no matter by whom encouraged.

The Episcopalians, on the other hand, seeing no peculiar detriment to the established religion in the prostration of a divine left to the "uncovenanted mercies" were not so inclined to believe the devil had a premeditated intent to make the blow prove fatal, and thus deprive the truth of a powerful champion. But though they discountenanced any attempt to proceed against Harry Clarke for intent to kill, still the fear of popish ascendancy induced them to avoid the encouragement or contact of the Catholics.

Thus the little family of refugees became almost as effectually outcasts in the Province as they had been on the soil of England. But they possessed in their isolated home a resource which even the bigot's arm was powerless to remove. They treasured the priceless deposit of the faith venerable from hoary antiquity, sacred from its unquestioning reception of the promise of perpetual purity, and Catholic from its uncounted conquests and its omnipresent empire. With this blazing torch they dared the pestilence, and the dying slave looked up to bless its flooding light, and the poor watched for it, knowing it to be no celibate faith; for gentle charity, its

spouse, came with it to scatter bread and soothe the throbs of pain. Amid unwholesome fogs its unflickering light was seen, and stifling air could not extinguish it. At length the tread of their horses' feet was recognized as the harbinger of joy and comfort to the afflicted.

Oftentimes beside them at the rude couch of the dying appeared a figure clothed in vestments which, once seen without the door, would have consigned their owner to a prison worse than death. But the fidelity of paupers was superior to the golden lure held out by freedom-of-opinion Christians, and the stealthy footsteps of the priest remained untracked.

Thus each succeeding week as it glided away found the Clarkes avoided and almost alone in their house upon the common. The Lieutenant Governor had on several occasions invited them to his entertainments, for he cherished a real esteem and respect for his relatives, and would fain have maintained them in society despite the malignant zeal of the provincials. But Harry prudently declined, knowing his presence would still further compromise the popularity of George Clarke, Esq., which his struggle with the Assem-

bly for power had seriously impaired, and might also serve as an opportunity for new insult. His motives being appreciated, the invitations ceased, but the Lieutenant Governor frequently testified his kindly feelings by calling at the "Hermitage," as he termed it, spending an hour or two with his cousins.

But there was one family who had from the memorable evening of the ball firmly advocated the claim of the Clarkes to be considered human beings, and evinced their contempt of public opinion by offering those little services which to the sensitive are so peculiarly grateful. This was the family of which Mary Sidney was a member. Her father, Colonel Sidney, had been an active and fearless leader in the border wars with the French, and could see no more reason for fearing the censure and opinions of his fanatical townsmen, than the invasion of a party of French or yelling savages. In either instance, his mode of warfare was identical; that is, he charged them with the impetuosity of a tornado, and never halted till the last foe was ridden down. And yet the old warrior was respected by his fellow-citizens, even when he strove to

shield the victims of their religious frenzy, and although he exhibited the strange anomaly of refusing to coerce the conscience of his "praying Indian" maiden to any of the Protestant services.

Mary had inherited her father's firmness of character; but that was an unusual provocation which could disclose more than its ordinary serene and steady flow. The sympathy of both had been at once enlisted for the Clarkes. Mary was interested in Agnes from their brief converse and the novelty of meeting a convert to the Catholic faith in those days of fierce persecution, and the Colonel admired the fearless bearing of young Clarke and his dragoon-like charge upon the clergyman. They immediately manifested their desire for a more intimate acquaintance, and in their cultivated minds and social intercourse the Clarkes found something of antidote for the lost delights of their once happy home in England. With the delicacy of feeling inherent to her nature, Mary Sidney had never renewed the conversation in which she had received so new and singular impressions of the Catholic faith. But one evening, in the latter part of February, sitting alone with Agnes in

the broad parlor of Colonel Sidney's residence before a blazing fire, her eye detected the sparkle of beads suspended from the young girl's neck, and she inquired the object of them.

"Oh! that is one of my prayer-books," said Agnes; "is it possible you have never seen a Catholic prayer-book?"

"Indeed, that must be a singular form of prayer! What do you mean?" inquired Mary, incredulously.

"I mean that Catholics have forms of prayer as well as Episcopalians, only we have more of them, and better adapted for every class and condition."

"But how can a string of beads like that be adapted to any one as a prayer-book?"

"In this way," replied Agnes; "suppose you were sick, and confined to a darkened room, how could you read the prayers of your Church when no ray of light could be admitted without occasioning you excessive pain? How grateful, then, would be a form of prayer to collect your wandering thoughts suggested through the instrumentality of something tangible! See, for instance, I am prostrated with sickness, and my throbbing

temples will scarcely allow me one moment for connected thought; but I feel in my fingers a crucifix, which represents to me the death of our Lord, and then the first bead I touch recalls to my mind the Creed, a condensed form of my belief and hopes; then the adjoining one reminds me of the Lord's Prayer, and afterward follows the salutation of the angel to the Mother of Jesus, and an invocation of her prayers, and, finally, meditations on the fifteen mysteries of the incarnation and sufferings of our Saviour. Thus is recalled to my mind a distinct sketch of my faith, my duties, and my hopes. How effective, too, becomes the simple string of beads among the Indians of the wilderness! A missionary seats himself amid a group of red-men, attracting their attention instantly by holding up this symbol, so like the trinkets they admire. Their eyes, so accustomed to read by signs, detect at once the representation of a man suspended from a cross. They are directly interested—they must know what it means, and thus the priest has won the first access to their hearts. The strange story of the image is soon made known to them, and they are prepared to make

an act of faith and receive baptism when the grace of God shall influence them, and they learn to recite the beads, which is the first of good works, that is prayer."

"But," interposed Mary, "though the adaptedness of these symbols to these purposes would never have occurred to me, yet it seems to me you violate the express command of God in making this graven image, and honoring it, and without the warrant of God's Word you invoke the aid of the Mother of Jesus and the angels, who cannot hear you."

"There," said Agnes, "is involved the great question, what is warranted by God's Word, and what is his Word? I can discover, even in the Protestant version of the Old Testament, authority for the making and honoring images in the worship of God, and that the patriarchs and prophets invoked and obtained the assistance of angels, and that through the ministry of angels the Eternal God communed with holy men under the old dispensation. Does not our Saviour himself say, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones, for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold

the face of my Father which is in heaven.' Surely this admonition implies the power and knowledge and interest of holy spirits concerning the children of God."

"But," replied Mary, "in asking the aid of angels you reject the mediatorship of Christ."

"No!" said Agnes; "Christ is the only mediator of salvation; but even you admit mediators of intercession when you ask the prayers of your friends or your minister. Why should not I say to the holy ones of God, standing in his immediate presence, 'Pray for me;' when you say to sinful men polluted by their contact with the world, 'Pray for me?' And we know from innumerable instances of Holy Writ that they watch our actions and rejoice over our repentance. Does not St. Paul tell us that when we are in the Church of God, we have 'come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.'"

"Admitting," replied Mary, "that Scripture

authorizes our belief in the continual presence of heavenly witnesses, there is no express command to seek their aid."

"No: we are not obliged to invoke the assistance of saints, for it is only good and profitable to seek their aid; but how unwise is he wh solicits the prayers of menials only when the officers of the king's household are present and willing to present his petition. The sincere prayer of men will be heard on our account; but, oh! how far better is the intercession of one who enjoys the vision of God."

"But," persisted Mary, "we have done our duty when we have obeyed the positive commands of God."

"And pray how are we to ascertain those commands?"

"The Bible is our unfailing rule of faith, for it contains all our duty, and he who seeks for it will find it clearly laid down there."

"May any one, then, who examines the Bible in a prayerful spirit, be infallibly assured of finding the truth?"

"Most certainly he may."

"How happens it, then, if this private reading

of the Bible be the means employed for the salvation of men, that so many sects exist in the world differing in doctrines and worship? These all consist of men blameless in their lives, and of apparently as sound intellects and as deep sincerity as any other body of men; how, then, if the sincere examination of the Scriptures is the true rule of faith, can these all differ in matters of doctrine?"

"Oh! they may differ in trivial matters, but they agree in the essential doctrines of salvation."

"Then if the Bible be the standard of truth it must of course lay down some rule by which each one may discriminate between what is essential and what is non-essential. Are you prepared to state this rule? For instance, our Saviour tells us, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' Here are expressed two acts as necessary to be performed before one can be admitted into the kingdom of God—the application of water and the application of the Spirit. Now if the book be the true standard of faith, it must express some rule by which to

determine between those who maintain the ap plication of water to be an essential, and those who maintain it to be a non-essential of salvation. And this rule must be so evident, that sincere and prayerful inquirers may agree upon it; for if God designs sincere men to be saved through reading of the Scriptures, he will not allow one prayerful reader to be taught by the book one doctrine, and another equally sincere to be taught the directly contrary one, for God is unity and harmony itself. Then, too, this this prayerful reading and interpreting of the Bible, if it be the true rule of faith established by God, must be identical with that presented by the Founder of Christianity and must be the same to-day that it was four, or twelve, or eighteen centuries ago; for he came to establish one rule of salvation, not many. Did he then place in the hands of his disciples a book, and say to them, 'This contains all that is necessary to be believed; read, and you will find all clear if you pray for divine aid?'"

"Certainly he did not," replied Mary, "for he taught his disciples, and then sent them forth to teach others."

"And did they immediately frame a history of Christianity, and say to the world, 'Read and interpret for yourselves; you can have no better guide than your own distinct judgments, assisted by prayer.'"

"Certainly not," said Mary; "for the books of the New Testament were written at different times and places, and it was many long years before they were collected together in one form."

"You virtually admit, then," answered Agnes, "that your rule of faith was not the same for many years after the death of Christ as it is now. How was it for the many centuries before the discovery of printing, when not one person in a thousand could have bought a manuscript of the Bible, and not one in ten thousand could have read it if he had it? Would He who came especially to save the poor, the unlettered, and the simple-minded, lay down for them a rule of faith which would be absolutely impossible for them to act upon for fourteen hundred years? Would the gentle God-man, who loved the poor for their childlike simplicity, insult their ignorance by pointing to a book replete with figures, parables, and local allusions, and many seeming

contradictions, and say to them, 'Read,' when they knew not the first letter, and when they had nothing to read."

"But," said Mary, "did not Christ himself say, 'Search the Scriptures?'"

"True," replied Agnes, "allowing that the Protestant version of the Gospel is correct. But to whom were these words addressed? were they not spoken to the Pharisees and the better informed among the Jews, who could read the old law, and were they not used rather as a reproof of their blindness, than a command to read—because reading the law they were not able to find Christ indicated the Messiah? For he adds, in immediate connection, 'for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and ye will not come to me that ye might have life.' But your quotation suggests another difficulty in the way of the Protestant rule. For if the person to whom you give a Bible to read and interpret for himself is not familiar with the original languages from which it is translated, how will he ascertain from the book which is the rule of faith to guide him, whether he has the inspired one of two lawful translations? The word 'search,' in this in-

stance, may be rendered either in the indicative or imperative sense, in both the Latin and Greek, and these convey either an assertion as 'you do search,' or a direction, as 'search!' If the ignorant holder of the book is influenced by the writings or authority of others in making his decision, then he violates the Protestant rule of faith, which is simply reading and determining for himself the meaning of Scripture."

"And what then," asked Mary, surprised at difficulties in her rule of faith never before considered, "can be an unerring rule for all?"

"That rule which maintains Christianity to be a divine institution," said Agnes, earnestly; "the rule established by the Eternal Word himself when he said to his appointed servants, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me.' Did he bid them teach for a few years, and then at their deaths leave

book to teach the world? No! the command was for *all* nations and for *all* time. They were to teach through their successors, appointed by themselves, authoritatively, till the end of time —'for I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.' He did not say to them, 'A time will come when the books and letters written by your own hands will be taken from you, and a new authority be established upon them which shall direct its energies and its forces to put down the authority I now bestow upon you for ever, and I will sanction the usurpation.' No! but he said, 'He that despiseth you despiseth me.' This, then, my dear friend is the Catholic rule of faith: that Christ established a Church with power to teach, and that he gave it the promise of perpetual purity by the offer to be ever with it, and that it is the 'pillar and ground of truth.' Its members may err and sin, but the dogmas it lays down are the teachings of God himself, and he commands, 'He that will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican.' Did they who raised the standard of revolt three centuries ago 'hear the Church.' Do you 'hear the Church,'

who believe in no Church so pure that its voice is better than your private judgment of Scripture? Can you believe that the broad avenue of light which Christ marked out through the flight of ages to guide the world to heaven became so clouded and obscure that men might no more walk in it with safety? Then do you make the promise of Christ a falsehood, and cast doubts on his divinity and the purity of your own Bible when you call the channel through which it came fearfully impure? If private reading of the Scriptures be the true rule of faith, then were millions of Christians in every age for ever lost who never handled the book. But if the belief in an unerring Church be true, then there is found a sure anchor for the learned and the unlearned to cling to. Now pardon me, dear Mary, for having wearied you, but I would to God you might find that childlike faith and that simple reasoning which gathers nearly two hundred millions of the learned and the ignorant about the altars of our holy Catholic Church in unity of doctrine."

Mary Sidney knelt that night beside her couch in the fervent attitude of prayer; and

when she laid her head upon her pillow, a still small voice whispered to her heart, "Test the basis of thy faith—private interpretation—and be sure before thou cease from the search that it tend not to make religion only systems of opinions"

CHAPTER III.

A BEAUTIFUL evening of the ensuing June found Mary Sidney at the window of her room, which looked toward the west. Her eye was fixed intently upon the motionless clouds, which seemed to be enjoying the farewell embrace of the departing sun; but the noble mind which was competent fully to appreciate the glories of the divine painting, and to revel in the gorgeous coloring of the Great Artist, was wandering in far different scenes. Had any one presumed to have asked her the subject of her earnest thoughts, she would certainly have started as one detected nearly in a profound secret, and she would have hesitated to reply. But she was only perplexing herself to discover the solution of a perfect enigma. Knowing that Harry Clarke had been, from their first acquaintance, interested in her society and conversation, and that he had uniformly remained in the room

when she called upon Agnes, as if gratified to have another opportunity of seeing one from the class of society in which formerly he had been so intimate, Mary could not comprehend why, recently, he had been so studiedly indifferent to her movements and so careful that his calls should be no more frequent than the punctilios of refinement required. She had inquired of Agnes the reason of this singular change in Harry, but Agnes could only state that he was closely engaged in the study of some old manuscripts lately received from England; nevertheless she would solicit from him an explanation of this conduct, which, she doubted not, was the result of mere inadvertence.

Mary knew that she regarded Harry Clarke with a more tender affection than that of a friend; but conscious of sufficient firmness in herself to cloak this feeling from every human being, and knowing that she must suppress it as hopeless, yet she could not consent to resign the society of the brother and sister which to her was delightful, not only for its congeniality, but especially because they, of all her acquaintances, were the only ones who could sympathize in her

struggles of mind, and assist her inquiries into the claims of the Catholic Church, which were forcing themselves irresistibly upon her attention.

At length the golden border of the clouds became gradually fainter and fainter as the sun disappeared, and the shades of evening gathered slowly over the sky, and the river which rolled beneath her became less and less distinct; but Mary Sidney observed them not; and it was only when the water grew bright again in the rays of the rising moon, that she started as if awakening from a long dream, surprised at the hours which had glided away unnoticed.

As she was about to leave the window, her eye caught the figure of a man emerging from the shadow of a house between her and the river, and with the instinct of a loving heart she instantly recognized the person of Harry Clarke moving rapidly along the street. He was closely followed by his servant bearing a small basket, which Mary felt assured was filled with comfort and nourishment for some poor suffering body. Scarcely had they passed out of sight, when she saw a watchman coming along another street, who paused as he crossed the path Harry and

his servant had taken, and picked up something lying in his way. He looked at it curiously for an instant, and then unrolling it and shaking it out, disclosed to Mary's eye in the clear moonlight something which resembled a dark coat or dress, and as he held it up toward the moon a small glistening object fell at his feet. Stooping to examine this new discovery, he uttered an exclamation of surprise, and hastily rolling it up in the dark-looking garment, he ran rapidly up the street. Mary's curiosity was aroused, for the thought flashed through her mind that Harry Clarke might have dropped some clothing he was carrying to the poor. Her supposition was soon confirmed, for she saw Harry in a few moments retracing his steps alone, and looking carefully along the walk as if for something he had lost. She called to her Indian girl, and sent her to request Mr. Clarke to come to the house, as she wished to speak with him. Cecily flew across the open lot, and delivering her message soon brought Harry to the door.

"Ah! Mr. Clarke," said Mary, "pardon me for troubling you; but were you not searching

for a dark-colored dress, or something of that kind, which you had dropped?"

"Why, yes!" exclaimed he, in a gratified tone; "how did you happen to find it?"

"I saw you pass," replied Mary, "with John, and, shortly after, a watchman picked up something on the walk, and with a sudden exclamation folded it up and hurried away up that street. It occurred to me, a moment after, that you might have lost it; but he was too far off then for me to call, and seemed in a great hurry."

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Harry, "this is dreadful!" but, recollecting himself, he instantly added, "promise me, Miss Sidney, by the love you bear Agnes, that you will not breathe a word of this occurrence to any one, for it concerns me intimately!"

"Why, Mr. Clarke," said Mary, in perfect amazement, "you alarm me—but——"

"Promise me, for God's sake," pleaded Harry, "for my time is fearfully precious! I will explain another time—there, thank you, thank you," he said, earnestly, as she nodded her head in assent, unable to speak from terror at his vehement manner.

In turning to leave, his eye fell upon the figure of the Indian girl, and putting his finger hastily to his lip, he glanced at her with a look full of meaning. She replied instantly, "Yes;" and he strode down the street which ran parallel with the one he had first gone, as if the fiends were following him.

The whole scene had passed before Mary Sidney like the singular creations of a dream, and for several minutes she stood upon the door-step gazing in the direction where Clarke had disappeared, quite bewildered and alarmed. She had a vague idea that the man she loved so well was in imminent peril, and that she possessed one key to his safety, but beyond this all was mere conjecture. At length recalling the significant glance directed by Harry toward Cecily, and her brief reply, she turned to her for some explanation. The Indian maiden was standing just without the shadow of the building, in the full flood of moonlight, and as Mary turned, she found the dark eyes of the girl fixed intently upon her countenance.

"Where has he gone, Cecily?"

The girl made no reply; but looking cautiously

about her to see that they were entirely alone and unnoticed, stole close to her mistress' side, and placing her finger firmly upon her lips, looked steadily in Mary's face.

"I know," said Mary, "that you have a secret to keep, but I only wish to know if Mr. Clarke is in great danger?"

"No, Miss Mary; Cecily think he safe," quietly answered the girl.

"Not in danger!" exclaimed Mary. "Oh! I am so happy! but why did he appear so agitated and rush away so fast, then?"

The girl made again upon her lip the impressive sign of silence.

"This is very strange!" muttered Mary; "but come in, Cecily," she added; "we must not stand in the street any longer, for father is gone away, and I hear footsteps coming this way."

They withdrew immediately within the door and secured it, for this remote quarter of the town was not deemed entirely safe after dusk from prowlers and thieves. Mary thinking Harry might return home by the same way he had gone, went, with Cecily, to her former position in the upper room, which looked out upon the river

and the intermediate houses. The Indian girl, reading in the restless glances of her mistress down the street the thoughts uppermost in her mind, said, quietly, "Mr. Clarke no come this way to-night."

Mary startled to find herself detected by the girl, but said, quickly, "Do tell me, Cecily, what this all means! I would no sooner betray nor injure Mr. Clarke than yourself."

"Cecily know that very well," replied the girl, with a scarcely perceptible smile; "but the 'praying Indian' never say 'Yes and mean No.'"

"Annoyed at the obstinacy with which her servant maintained her secret, and each instant feeling an undefined tremor increasing upon her, Mary longed for some sound or sight without to destroy the death-like stillness which had settled upon this thinly inhabited part of the city. But not a ripple broke the polished mirror of the river, and the scene was only varied by the moving shadows of the scattered buildings as the clouds slowly veered to the northward. The two females must have remained thoughtful and motionless for at least a half hour, when Cecily, who was crouched at Mary's side, watching the

anxious face of her dear mistress, sprang to her feet, and holding her head as low out of the window as she could reach, seemed to be listening to some very faint sound. Mary, trembling like an aspen-leaf, attempted to listen also; but she could hear nothing except the loud beating of her heart. The Indian girl, drawing in her head slowly through the window, turned upon her mistress such a look of mingled fear and horror, that Mary, grasping her arm tightly, whispered hoarsely, "What is it, Cecily? tell me this instant."

The poor girl tried to articulate something, but the words almost strangled her. She could not speak, but pointed nervously in the direction Mary had seen the watchman run. Listening breathlessly, Mary now heard a confused murmur of voices borne along upon the night air, but evidently a long way off. Then from the same direction came an occasional sound entirely new to her, but so fearfully wild and distinct, that she shuddered as with an ague. Another and another followed, and then she heard only the voices of men increasing louder and louder as they came each instant nearer.

"Oh! Cecily, what is that dreadful noise?" whispered her pale lips.

"Bloodhounds!" gasped the trembling girl.

It was indeed true. Cecily's ear had not proved false. The servants of the law were tracking some poor criminal by the keen scent of bloodhounds. Nearer and nearer came the voices, till the terrified maidens beheld issuing from the shadow of the opposite buildings a party of policemen holding in with difficulty four immense bloodhounds, which struggled fiercely to free themselves from the chains which were linked about their throats. What was Mary's horror to see them halt on the spot where the mysterious garment had been discovered, and hold a consultation about the probable route of its owner. Mary and her companion could hear most of the conversation, and gathered from it that a large reward was expected for the detection of the person who had dropped the bundle. Finally one of the men exclaimed, "Well, Dick, if we stand here talking all night, we'll have but a poor chance to catch our bird!"

"Come, then," said he who appeared to command the party, "put the dogs on some of these

tracks, and I swear they'll follow 'em if all the city has crossed 'em."

The posse divided immediately into small parties of three or four to each hound, that they might hold the chain and prevent his escape or injury to any one he might meet on the trail. One of the hounds quickly took a scent which led down the street Harry had first gone with his servant, and another took one in the opposite direction up the street. The other two went off side by side toward the house of Colonel Sidney.

Cecily had regained her calmness, and regarded the whole scene with the apparent stoicism of her race, and was as motionless as marble. But when she saw the two hounds make directly for the house, she was awakened to a sense of her own peril; for with the quick perception of the Indian, she felt that the two dogs were on the trail of Harry Clarke and herself.

"Come away, quick," she said, grasping her mistress' hand and attempting to pull her from the window.

Mary started from her partial stupor at the sound of Cecily's voice and sprang quickly back-

ward into the room. The next instant the blood-hounds were at the door. One of them turned instantly down the street, but the other paused before the house and bayed furiously, attempting at the same time to rush up the steps; but the men held him back. After a brief deliberation they knocked loudly at the door. One of the female slaves ran to open it, supposing her master had returned. It was with difficulty the hound was held in, while one of the men inquired, "Whose house is this?"

"Colonel Sidney's, massa," replied the slave.

"What, Colonel Sidney of the Assembly!" exclaimed another voice.

"Yes, massa."

"Tell him, then, I want to see him," said the last voice.

"Massa no here—him gone dis 'ole day."

"Gone!" exclaimed the voice, and then added, "has any one come in here since dusk?"

"No, massa."

"That's queer," said the man who had just spoken; "the dog come right across here as if he'd struck a fresh trail. Look here, girl! are you a papist?"

"Oh! no, no!" exclaimed the slave, with horror.

"Do any papists live here?"

"Yes, massa; Cecily one o' dem."

"Tell her to come to the door for a minute." The slave ran up the stairs to deliver her message; but Mary had heard distinctly the conversation below, and started to go down when they sent for Cecily. But the Indian girl sprang before her, and pleaded with her mistress not to see the men, but leave her to manage the affair with them.

"Well," said Mary, "go, then, but be very guarded in what you say."

Cecily accompanied the slave to the door, but the instant the hound saw her, he set up a furious baying and attempted to spring at her.

"Come, girl," said one of them, "tell us where the priest is that was around here to-night, and we'll pay you well for it."

"Cecily see no priest come," replied she, calmly.

"Look here, girl," said he eyeing her sternly, "we know a popish priest has been about here, for we've found his cassock and crucifix, and the

hound has tracked your footsteps from the very spot where he dropped it; and he'd tear you to pieces if we'd let him."

"Cecily never see him here," she replied again. "Do you mean to say, girl, that you went not out there to-night?" said he, pointing to the open space between the streets.

"Cecily walk there, but Cecily no see priest."

"Well," said the man, turning to his companions, "we can't get nothing out o' her, and, maybe, she did'nt see him. We can't arrest her only 'cause she walked across the lot—so we'd better find a track and try again. Come along."

By a united effort they dragged the bloodhound away, and the slave quickly slammed the door behind them. Cecily followed her mistress to the window to observe what course the men would take next. Leading the hound several times around the place where the vestment of the priest had been discovered, and finding that he indicated no different direction than the other dogs had already taken, they suffered him to follow the other dog, which had likewise gone to the house and then instantly turned down the street Harry Clarke had taken in his flight.

Their footsteps had scarcely died away, when the party of pursuers who had gone down the street first traversed by Harry and his servant appeared again in sight. Their hound was leading them on the back track taken by Harry Clarke when he returned to search for the lost cassock. Guiding them to the spot where Cecily had stopped the search and delivered her message, the hound then turned toward the house, and running close to the door-step continued on down the parallel street just traversed by the other two dogs. Thus the three parties of pursuers were at length on the same trail.

With the most intense anxiety had the mistress and servant observed the whole scene from the open window; but when at length the death-like stillness settled once more upon this quarter of the town, Mary looked in Cecily's face as one who is burdened with terrible secrets, and would fain read their confirmation in another's countenance. But the Indian girl was looking fixedly into the street, as if in deep thought. Suddenly raising her eyes, as if a new idea had flashed upon her mind, she looked long and intently toward the river. Mary followed the direction of

Cecily's eye, but saw only the flashing moonbeams on the water. The next instant the Indian girl uttered an exclamation of delight, and pointed out to her mistress a boat rowed rapidly up the river, but quite near the shore on which Colonel Sidney's house was situated.

"I see two figures in the boat, Cecily—do you think it is Mr. Clarke and John?"

"Yes, Miss Mary," was the laconic answer of the girl as she kept her eye upon the boat which was moving up the stream with amazing rapidity, and which was in a few moments concealed by the intervening buildings.

For several minutes the two scanned the smooth bosom of the stream, as if expecting some indication of pursuit, but none came; and the Indian girl, kissing her mistress hand with fervor, exclaimed, "He safe now, Miss Mary."

"Thank God!" ejaculated Mary; and dropping her head upon the window-sill she shed tears of joy.

"Long after Cecily had retired, Mary Sidney sat in the window meditating upon the singular revelations of that night. She was now assured that Harry Clarke was a disguised priest, and

that his detection had almost been effected by the unfortunate loss of his cassock in the street. And yet she was surprised to feel so differently than she had always expected to feel if she should ever come in contact with a priest of the proscribed Church. There was none of that sly and sinister expression about his eyes, which she had been taught to believe inseparable from the Catholic clergy. Even in the conversations he had held with her upon the doctrines and principles of his Church, she could not but acknowledge that he had only answered her own questions and never volunteered, unsolicited, any argument or reasons which savored of proselytism. Then, too, she was constrained to admit that his adoption of the Catholic Church could have been influenced by no motives of worldly gain or aggrandizement, for in uniting himself with it he became a byword among his friends, and by entering the priesthood he forfeited his claim to be regarded as a human being. She had admired the calm intrepidity which Harry and his sister had exhibited in seeking out the hovels where the neglected poor were melting away before the fierce ravages of the small-pox, and their unre-

mitting supplies of bread she knew had cheered many a famishing wretch who would have been turned away from the doors of many who raised the loudest cries to purge the land of the leaven of popery. And with these feelings of regard for his nobility of character mingled others which would not let her conscience rest in quiet. Perhaps he was right to embrace the old faith and reject the new; and perhaps Agnes, the poor outcast girl, would at the last great day be able to give a far better reason to the Almighty Judge for her belief and practice than herself.

"I will not," she said to herself, "be so inconsistent as to proclaim perfect freedom of religious opinion, and then fear to exercise it myself; prejudices of my birth, my education, and my friends shall not contract my search for truth. Do Thou give me grace and strength to find thy light, oh, Eternal God; but," she added, with a burst of enthusiasm and determination, innate to her noble soul, "in any event thou art safe Harry Clarke, for never—never will Mary Sidney point the bloodhounds to thy sacerdotal vestments, thou self-devoted martyr!"

CHAPTER IV.

When Colonel Sidney returned from the country on the day following the narrow escape of Harry Clarke, he found the city in a state of wild confusion. The startling rumor that a popish priest was prowling somewhere in the neighborhood, and that his cassock had been dropped in one of the remote quarters of the town, collected groups of citizens at every corner, to wonder and conjecture what calamity Providence was about to pour on their most pure and devout city. Some of the more knowing ones asserted that they had frequently encountered certain suspicious-looking individuals in narrow lanes and bypaths, who appeared anxious to conceal their countenances by slouching their hats over them and keeping closely within the hadows of buildings and trees. Others endeavored to recall to the minds of their listeners the many times they had maintained that several

of the Episcopal body were no better than concealed papists introduced into the Colony for the purpose of contaminating and perverting the religious principles of the young and inexperienced, and thus prepare the way for the subversion of the Protestant government and religion. But a few of the more favored ones had actually detected an unaccountable smell of brimstone in the atmosphere of lanes and alleys where Catholic paupers had died, which they felt could be nothing less than sure indications of the presence of some devilish priests about the sick. The more incredulous portion of the population, however, considered that statement to be the most reliable which asserted that the police had tracked with bloodhounds to the river's bank close by the fort footsteps of some one from the identical spot where the priest's dress was found, and that the culprit had unquestionably eluded their grasp in a boat.

From the thousand conflicting reports which were prevalent, the Colonel finally gleaned the fact, that suspicious footsteps had been tracked to his own dwelling, and that the hound had indicated Cecily to be their owner. Anxious

for the alarm his daughter might have sustained by this occurrence, he hurried homeward. He found Mary composed and apparently free from agitation; and she played her part so well, that he was convinced Cecily had not seen any priest, but had only imprudently walked away from the house by moonlight. When at length every available means for the detection of the priest had been employed in vain, and no further clue to his lurking-place was found, the excitement gradually subsided under the impression that he had fled from the city altogether, and Mary Sidney breathed freely once more. She deemed it prudent to avoid visiting the Clarkes for several days after the discovery of the cassock, and it was not until the search was given up that she ventured to call upon Agnes. She felt that now it was in her power to prove to the sister that she was truly her friend, for in her hands was the liberty, and perhaps the life, of the brother. With this consciousness of her claim upon the gratitude and love of the Clarke family she immediately said to Agnes, "I do not know, dear Agnes, how far your brother has made you aware of my acquaintance with

his secret, but I know it all, and be assured that while my heart beats with life, the hunted priest shall never be betrayed by me."

"We knew it, dear Mary," exclaimed the gentle girl, while the bright tears gushed to her eyes; "and the brother and sister will repay it by the best and almost the only return the proscribed Catholic can make, which is our fervent prayers that God will ever keep his angels about you to shield off every approach of sin and make your life holy; but," she continued, "I had almost forgotten that you have not seen Harry since that dreadful night. He thought it better for the Catholics to be very quiet and retired during the days the populace were so infuriated, so that he had had no opportunity to express his gratitude for your silence. I will call him from his room."

When Harry appeared, and in his own frank and cordial way grasped Mary's hand, and poured forth the enthusiastic gratitude of his warm heart, she felt that the happiest moment of her life had indeed come.

"Yes," continued he, "your silence not only makes the hearts of the brother and sister su-

premely happy, but it bestows upon the poor and the dying Catholics most precious balm, and they will bless you for saving their priest and father from a loathsome dungeon. God bless you! God bless you always. But there is one other——"

He was suddenly interrupted in his sentence by the announcement of Colonel Sidney's arrival. He had come with his carriage to take Mary out of the city on a visit to his sister. Harry seized his opportunity, when conducting her to the carriage, to whisper in her ear, "Come and see Agnes the first evening you have leisure; be sure to come in the evening, for that is the only time I think it safe."

Mary did not catch the remainder of his whisper, for the Colonel was now close behind them, and Harry appeared anxious not to be overheard. Curious as she was to know the reason of such a request from Harry Clarke, he would not hazard another whisper, and she was constrained to wait for an explanation till they should meet again. But she was not destined to know the conclusion of his request for many long and weary months.

Scarcely had the vehicle traversed a mile of their route, when the horses became frightened at a heap of burning stubble, and plunging down a ravine near the road dashed the carriage to atoms. Mary, frightfully mangled and insensible, was borne homeward by her father, who was only slightly injured, and it was several hours before any reasonable hopes could be entertained of her recovery. At length she opened her eyes, but they appeared wild and unnatural, and a long night of delirium ensued. At the expiration of a week, consciousness returned, and she recognized Agnes bending over her.

But the sickness resulting from her injuries confined her to her room for months, and when at length she was entirely recovered, she found that summer and autumn had glided away unnoticed, and the chill blasts of December were sweeping the streets of the city. Whenever, during this long period, Agnes could leave the duties of her home and her visits to the poor, she was found at Mary's bedside, cheering the wearisome hours of the invalid like a daily sunbeam. And Cecily, too, with the devotedness of her race, never left the room of her beloved mistress

save when the duties of her religion called her away. On these occasions, Mary was certain she knew the girl's destination, but she never mentioned to Cecily her suspicions. She had observed her rise frequently long before day-break, and stealing noiselessly from the room remain absent about an hour; and feeling assured her stolen visits must be to the priest, she longed to know how the time was occupied, and if the Catholics did indeed worship idols there, and bow down before pieces of bread and think it God himself.

She determined when Agnes came again, to have her solve these difficulties, and the absurd reports which were circulated regarding the Catholic worship. She doubted not that Agnes would do away with these misrepresentations of Catholic doctrines as she had already removed many incorrect ideas and impressions of them, carefully instilled in her mind by the enemies of the Catholic Church. It was then with extreme amazement that she heard Agnes not only maintain the real presence of Christ in the Eucharistic bread, but whole and entire in each particle

"Oh! Agnes, Agnes!" she exclaimed, "

was almost a Catholic in belief before you came, but now you drive me where I seem to have no choice but infidelity. I have reflected and reasoned with myself; I have examined the history of my own Church, and have found it based upon the passions and caprices of a monster of wickedness; I have gone farther, and learned the character and spirit of those who declared authority in religion to be a chimera, and proved their claim to be the inspired prophets of God by truckling to the worst passions of princes and violating the rule of faith which severed them from the old Church by setting up an authority of their own which men must yield to or be persecuted. Yes, Agnes, I have compared the two rules of faith, and find that private interpretation will justify men in believing anything, no matter how discordant to the first principles of morality, for those who have been the most furious and wicked have appealed to the Bible to sustain their acts. But, Agnes, I can never, never bring my mind to believe such an absurdity as that a piece of bread is God! I know that millions of the learned and wise in every age have believed it with the docility of

children, and that even those who dared to withstand the prejudices of their age have also received it undoubtingly; but I cannot believe a doctrine so contrary to common sense and to he evidence of my senses as this."

Agnes listened without a word of interruption, and when she had finished, said, calmly, "Mary, do you believe in the Trinity?"

"Certainly I do," replied she; "but what connection has the Trinity with the doctrine of transubstantiation?"

"Is not the doctrine of the Trinity this: God the Father existed from all eternity. The Son was begotten of the Father from all eternity, and the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father and the Son from all eternity, and yet the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are equal even in eternity. Is not this mystery possessed of both the objections you make to the Holy Eucharist? Is it not contrary to common sense and to the evidence of the senses, which tell us that the thing begetting must exist before the thing begotten; and yet the Father did not exist before the Son, but both equally existed from all eternity. And why," she continued, "do you be-

lieve this incomprehensible mystery of the Trinity ?"

"I believe it," replied Mary, "because God taught it."

"Well, then," said Agnes, "if you may believe this incomprehensible mystery, so contrary to common sense and the evidence of the senses, why may not I also believe the other for the same reason that I believe God taught that also? Will not the same reasons which justify you in calling my doctrine an absurdity, equally justify me in calling the Trinity an absurdity also ?"

"But think, Agnes, how revolting to believe that this bread changed into God may even be eaten by filthy dogs, or may be insulted in any other way ! is not this unreasonable ?"

"But, Mary, you seem to have forgotten," replied Agnes, "that God took upon himself the humiliating form of a creature; that God was was beaten; that God was mocked; that God was covered with foul spittle; that God was murdered ! Was it any evidence that he was not God because men could and did profane his sacred person ? And may not the Almighty Creator of all things, if he desire it, leave the

taste, the color, the smell, and the appearance of bread, and yet change himself into the essence of it which is below all these?"

"But, Agnes, where Christ speaks of his body, it is only in a figurative sense."

"Do you not see," responded Agnes, "that here comes in again the difficulty of your rule of faith. You contend for a figurative sense, while I, taking advantage of your principle, that which is not clearly and distinctly laid down in one part of Scripture will be explained by some other part, adopt the literal meaning, because I find the other instances which refer to the eating of Christ's Body sustain the literal meaning. I find, for instance, that some of his disciples abandoned him because he maintained the literal sense. They said, considering like Protestants, that it was an absurdity, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' Did our Saviour say to them, 'Do not be offended at this, for I am speaking figuratively. I do not mean literally that men will eat my flesh, nor would I suffer you to have a wrong impression from my words, which you have erroneously construed in their ordinary sense.' No! but he answers their very

natural objection with this affirmation: 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye shall not have life in you.' Even this did not satisfy them, for they persisted, and said again, 'This is a hard saying, who can hear it?' Then he says, as if unwilling to lose these disciples, 'Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.' It was as if he had said to them, 'Have you not been convinced of my power in the miracle which I have just performed, of making a few loaves feed thousands, so that you can receive my word now when I promise to make my own body feed millions who shall believe in me? Then will I perform another miracle, which must convince you, by ascending up into heaven before your very eyes! I know it is hard to be received by your carnal understandings; but you must receive what I tell you by your spiritual understandings.' And they, like you, Mary, went away and walked no more with him, because they, too, thought it an

absurdity. Surely, if you reject the doctrine simply because it is absurd, you must also reject the belief in the Trinity !"

"Indeed, Agnes, I believe you are right in thinking this no greater mystery than that of the Trinity." After a moment of deep reflection she exclaimed, "Would to God I might have you always with me when these objections which I make so thoughtlessly suggest themselves ! Oh, Agnes, I would give worlds to feel that I was infallibly right, and you must aid me to solve all these doubts, and give me plausible reasons for every dogma, as you have certainly for this."

"With all my heart, dear Mary, will I aid your examination, whether it be of the Scriptures or of history; but remember what I say to you, that if you ever cease to be a Protestant and become a Catholic, which may God grant ! it will be in precisely the same way the most ignorant pauper embraces the Church. You may search the annals of the primitive Church and the writings of the fathers; you may delve deep into old libraries and fathom the depths of endless theological controversies, but it will be only when you are willing to believe that Christ

established a church with power to teach, and that it must be the final resort in all disputes, that you can become a Catholic. You must resign the pride of intellect and opinion; you must believe that in your relations with God as an accountable being you are the most fallible creature in creation, and that you have no right to elevate your opinions and your interpretations of the Bible above the teachings of the Church, which is the 'pillar and ground of truth.' In every other department of knowledge you may hold your own opinions and cherish your own theories, but in religious truth you may not transgress the limits of that tribunal which Christ has commanded every one to hear. You must become as a little child before you can enter the kingdom of God, for the unlettered and the simple were the especial objects of our Saviour's mission; and the learned man, with his display of never-ending accomplishments has not one-half the chance for salvation as they."

"I believe my pride could bend to humility and docility," said Mary, "if my mind were assured of the claims of your Church."

"Do not judge rashly," replied Agnes, "for

it is only the grace of God can bring one into the Church even after its claims are established in the reason and the intellect. Oh! it is very hard for one who has asserted his infallibility against the whole world combined, when he could feel in his hands the covers of a book, to come and kneel humbly beside one as liable to sin as himself, and lay before him the black and loathsome secrets of the unseen heart, as the deputy of the universal Church."

"But why should not the priest confess his sins as well as the laity?" inquired Mary.

"Indeed he does," said Agnes; "and even the highest potentate of the Church on earth—the centre of unity and power—is as bound to confess as the lowliest child in his boundless spiritual domain."

"I supposed, Agnes," said Mary, in amazement, "that you regarded the head of your Church on earth incapable of committing sin!"

"There is another evidence of the necessity of learning Catholic doctrines from ourselves only, and not from our enemies. Those of them who are candid men in other respects, will not take the pains to investigate our dogmas, but

receive the statements of prejudiced writers undoubtingly; while the few who do know them, most falsely and maliciously misrepresent them, that they may pander to that hatred of the Church which its Founder foretold would ever exist against it."

"Is it then untrue that Catholics believe in the infallibility of the Pope?"

"Yes, totally false, as you understand it. He is a man as liable to sin as any other, and as a man will be judged at the last day. It is only in his capacity as head of the Church on earth, and in that capacity delivering the teachings of Christ, that our Saviour has promised that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church' thus based upon him whom Christ denominated a rock."

"Well, Agnes, by the help of God I will probe this matter to the bottom, for I begin to see how unfairly and partially I have acted toward the Church in which all others took their root."

CHAPTER V.

In the north-eastern suburb of the city, in the autumn of 1740, was situated the shop of one John Hughson, a man of infamous character, which answered the joint purpose of a drinking-place for slaves, and a rendezvous for thieves and burglars. Here was concocted nearly every scheme of villainy perpetrated in the city, and here every man devoid of moral principle might find congenial spirits and a place of concealment for his embezzled goods.

Hughson, the proprietor of the establishment, was a short and muscular fellow, with a countenance indicative of great cunning and adroitness, and from his long experience with every species of wickedness, was the favorite patron of the abandoned and reckless portion of the population. The most efficient tool in his employ was his indented servant, Mary Burton, who obeyed her master's will with alacrity, and

seldom found any command so outrageous as to interfere with her moral scruples.

One bitter cold morning, in the month of December, this girl was standing on the door-step of her master's shop, after the exertion of her customary sweeping, staring up and down the street for something to gratify her curiosity, when a little girl of some four or five years came down the walk and begged for something to eat The poor child was shivering under its scanty covering, and its little pinched-up face indicated many long days of suffering and hunger.

"Go 'way, you little thief," said the servant, raising her broom threateningly, "or I'll beat you."

"Oh! don't hit me," lisped the child, "me so hungry."

"Go 'long, I tell you!" exclaimed the servant in a louder tone, shaking the broom above her head, "or you'll be sorry for it."

"Only a piece o' bread," replied the child, extending her little hand pleadingly toward Mary Burton.

Down came the heavy broom upon the bare head of the child, and the little creature fell

heavily to the ground. Then the large tears swelled to its gentle blue eyes, and the puny, shrivelled hands were held up to protect the head from another stroke; but they were beaten down by repeated blows, and the poor child screamed loudly with pain and fear.

At this instant the tall figure of Harry Clarke's servant appeared in sight, and in a few seconds the brutal act was interrupted, and the little sufferer placed upon its feet again.

"What do you mean by beating that little child so?" he demanded, in a severe tone.

"Go about your business," replied the girl; "what affair is it of yours?"

"It's an abominable outrage," said John Bowers, "to abuse a little thing like that, and I shall complain of you to the magistrate."

"Ha! ha!" sneered the girl; "do you suppose he'd believe a papist under oath?—not he! I know you," she added; "you belong to that popish gentleman up on the common, and if you don't mind you'll both get your necks twisted for hiding that infernal priest somewhere 'round here. Now do go to the magistrate," sh laughed, mockingly, "won't you?"

John made no reply, for he knew too well that no magistrate would receive a complaint against a Protestant from a popish recusant; so he led the child up the street till they were out of the girl's hearing, and then asked where her parents lived.

"Mother died to-night," said the child.

"Do you mean last night?" he inquired. She nodded her head in assent. "And where is your father?"

"He dead too," sobbed the little creature. "Oh! give me something to eat, sir! me so hungry," murmured the starving child.

"Poor thing! Why did'nt you tell me that before?" exclaimed John, taking from his basket bread and meat, which the half-famished infant devoured so eagerly, that his kind heart was touched and tears started to his eyes. "Come, now," he said, "and show me where your house is."

The child, conducting the servant through several intricate streets, at length paused before a building which looked as if it might be used for a stable, and pushing open the creaking door said this was her home. The first object within

that attracted his attention was the figure of a woman lying dead upon the floor, with a crucifix clasped tightly in one hand, and the other lying in the ashes of a rude stone fireplace, and consumed nearly to the wrist. The floor was strewn with wisps of straw, which seemed to have been dragged from the corner of the hovel, as if the woman had used her bed for fuel; for the burnt hand lay close beside half-consumed fragments of straw. A scorched blanket was wrapped about her, and her long and tangled hair was spread wildly out upon the rude flooring of the shed, while a few locks were scattered over the upper part of the face, concealing the eyes and forehead.

John placed his basket on the floor, and, kneeling down beside the body, brushed back the long auburn hair to examine the face of the dead woman. Instantly a deathly paleness overspread his countenance and a shiver ran through his body; then dropping his head upon the bosom of the corpse he groaned as if his heart were breaking. The child had stood near the door as if afraid to approach the body; but when she heard his voice so fearfully agonized,

she stole softly to his side, and placing her puny hand upon his head said, in a subdued tone, "Me 'fraid of mother."

The child's touch recalled John to himself, and raising his head from the body, his eye fell upon the little creature beside him. Taking her in his arms he examined the features intently for an instant, and then said to her, "What is your name, child?"

"Ursula Day," she replied, quickly.

He compressed his lips as if in acute pain, and then asked, "Did your father die here, too?"

"No; on the ship on the water," she answered again.

"Did your mother speak to you last night?" he inquired.

"Mother say, 'Jesus and Mary take care of little Ursula;' and then mother die," said the poor child bursting into tears.

John, bending over the body, crossed himself, and for a few moments his lips moved in prayer; then rising and removing the blanket from the corpse, he said to the child, "Ursula, will you go with me and get warm?"

The little creature immediately assented, and

reached out her tiny hand to John. He wrapped the blanket closely about her, and carrying her upon one arm and the basket on the other, walked away rapidly in the direction of Harry Clarke's dwelling. When he reached the door of the house, Harry was just going out.

"What have you in that blanket, John?"

"A poor child, sir, I found starving in the street, and she led me to her dead mother, whom I recognized as my only sister. Oh! my God, thou indeed temperest the wind to the shorn lamb," exclaimed he, and then continued: "I found her dead, with a crucifix in her hand; and the child says she died invoking the names of Jesus and Mary. God is indeed merciful, for when I left her in Europe she was a furious Protestant."

"But was no one with the child or the mother?" inquired Harry.

"Not a soul, sir! I found a brutal woman beating the child in the street; and there had been evidently no one with the mother when she died, for one hand lay in the fire till it was nearly burnt off."

"That was dreadful!" exclaimed his master;

"but bring the child in, and Agnes will provide for it; and then get up the horses immediately, for we must bury your poor sister before any one notices the body, or it will be carried off and not receive Christian burial. Oh! John, my heart bleeds for you—but we shall have a better world to live in by and by."

"There is more of blessing in this to me than misery, for I know that she died in the faith," responded John, as he carried in the little orphan to Agnes.

The carriage was ready in a few moments, and driven quickly to the shop of a poor mechanic who was a Catholic. He prepared a rude coffin in a few moments, for the affair was to be conducted immediately, if at all; and watching his opportunity when there was no one near to observe him, he slipped the box under the seats of the carriage, and they quickly drove off.

It seemed as if Providence had an especial guardianship over every movement of Clarke and his servant, for they succeeded in placing the body of the poor woman in the coffin without detection; and those who saw their vehicle driving slowly through a part of the town frequented

only by the poorer classes, supposed they were out on their wonted visits to the suffering. They feared to take with them the poor orphan child to see its last parent buried, lest, inadvertently, she might at some time betray the priest, so that Agnes was their only companion as they left the city behind them and drove to a remote and lonely ravine to perform the solemn yet affectionate service which Holy Mother the Church decrees for her poor children who have passed away. With the spade and axe, which had been concealed in their vehicle, Harry and his servant succeeded in opening the hard earth sufficiently to receive the coffin, which was hurriedly deposited, and the rites of the Church murmured above the sleeping sister of poor John, who now was alone in the world with the little blue-eyed Ursula. Alone! no, thank God! not alone, for in that remote ravine, apparently so wild and desolate, were fluttering the holy wings of myriads of angels; and when the poor outcasts knelt beside the rude grave of the convert to breathe a prayer for her soul's repose, there went up to the great white throne of the Eternal a mighty voice of prayer from the holy lips

of enfranchised spirits, that the earnest supplication of the poor papists might find favor before the Good Shepherd. No! the devoted little family were not friendless, for when they left the wanderer sleeping in the wild ravine, a beautiful legion of heavenly guardians encircled them, holding forth to them supporting arms, and whispering to their inmost souls the soothing messages from God.

They drove away with thankful hearts that no fierce howl of pursuit had broken in upon their secret burial, and no rude hand had come to burst the coffin-lid of the long-haired mother, or tear away the symbol of redemption from her grave. The carriage rolled swiftly along the suburbs of the town, but not a human being of the twelve thousand citizens of New York dreamed that it contained a returning funeral party of the proscribed faith, and scarcely a Catholic knew that in that little party was a priest of the fiercely hated Scarlet Lady.

When Agnes arrived at home, she found Cecily waiting for her, with a message from her mistress to bring Agnes to the house, as soon as she had leisure, upon a matter of importance.

"What has occurred, Cecily, at Colonel Sidney's?" inquired Agnes.

"Miss Mary's aunt come last night, and Miss Mary had trouble all day," replied the girl.

The Colonel's carriage was at the door, and Agnes in a few moments found herself in Mary Sidney's presence.

"Oh, Agnes!" she exclaimed, "I am so delighted to see you. Father's sister arrived last night, and has done nothing since she came but abuse the Catholics. When she found that I defended them, she planted herself before me in that great chair, and, laying an immense Bible on the table before her, said with a look of triumph, 'Now, Miss Mary, will you cross swords with me?' Of course I did, and instantly attacked her rule of faith, determined to make her prove its validity and its adaptedness to poor heathens who might be in a dying state before they could hear ten chapters read to them, or determine by inspection of the Scriptures, whether there were three Persons in the Godhead or only one. She was furious at this, because she expected me to argue upon the invocation of saints, and faith and works, so tha

she might fire a whole volley of texts which she was accustomed to pronounce with peculiar emphasis. But I knew full well that if we commenced rival quotations from Scripture we should not end till the whole book was divided into two armies of texts ready to rush upon one another, so I maintained that if the foundation was not right, the superstructure of dogmas could not be correct either, and made her attempt to sustain 'private interpretation' as a sufficient rule for the world at large. Oh! Agnes, you cannot imagine how furious she was; and now she is exerting her influence over father to induce him to spend a few months with her in Albany, at her brother-in-law's house, till the next meeting of the Assembly. I know that her object is to remove me from Catholic influence. But, Agnes, millions of miles' distance cannot eradicate from my mind the absurdity of making any man his own judge of the meaning of Scripture, when those who read it most differ most, and the tendency of such a rule is to make sects instead of 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism' for the whole world."

"But will he go with her, do you think?" inquired Agnes, anxiously.

"I cannot tell, Agnes; but fearing he might be induced, I wished to learn from you what were the preparatory steps to my being received into the Church, for I fear to leave the city while I am without its pale."

Agnes was not prepared for this announcement, for her hopes of Mary's conversion had pointed far, far into the future, and for a moment she stood as one paralyzed. Then reading in Mary's countenance the assurance that her heart had indeed accompanied her words, a gleam of holy joy lighted her sweet face, and she dropped almost involuntarily upon her knees, while the quivering lip breathed her intense gratitude in the unseen ear of God. Yes, it was one of those perfectly blissful moments when the splendor of the celestial city flashes for an instant through the sombre veil of time and the chords of the heart vibrate with a single note of the exquisite harmony of heaven.

"Oh, Mary!" she exclaimed, "this moment recalls to me the happiness of my first communion. But tell me how this resolution came upon you—with me it was the fruit of wakeful nights and the study of long years."

"I determined," repled Mary, "first to satisfy myself of the Divinity of Christ as opposed to Judaism. I found his claims fully established in my own mind; and then the only question was, How did he organize his system of teaching so that the body of his followers might not be as 'a house divided against itself,' and so that a beggar might be saved without becoming a theologian, or a sick man without being a scholar, or a poor man without purchasing a manuscript utterly beyond his means? I could not discover, Agnes, any rule but that which declares an organization of men in their joint capacity to be a divine institution, perpetual and infallible, to the consummation of the world, as teachers of truth; and now I am willing to sacrifice everything to the claims of that Church to which Christ commanded obedience, and which alone claims that it cannot mislead men or teach them error."

"Well, Mary," replied Agnes, joyfully, "you have made your first Act of Faith; and if you can contrive to see the priest to-night, you may commence immediately to receive instruction preparatory to conditional baptism. Are you well enough yet to venture out of doors?"

"I think so; but I dare not suffer father to know this, for though he is so liberal and independent, he knows very well that this would disgrace me among his friends; but I will endeavor to come to-night; and remember to tell your brother that I shall expect an explanation of his request when I last saw him in the summer—he will understand it."

Agnes hastened homeward with a lighter step and a happier heart than she had known since the escape of the priest from bloodhounds, several months before.

Mary Sidney sat for a long time in the chair in which Agnes had left her, serious and thoughtful. She was conscious of greater ease of mind, and saw her future path clearer than ever before. She had actually committed herself to Agnes, and now she, too, was to be a member of the detested Church of Rome. The fact might be concealed for a time; but in a very brief period she would be exhibited to the world as a warning and a reproach. The preacher from his desk would mention her name with horror, and the proverb would every day be repeated, "Fallen as low as Mary Sidney the apostate!" But this

was not the thought which wounded her gentle heart the most acutely, and brought the scalding tears to her beautiful eyes. No; Mary Sidney possessed a soul with courage and firmness to surmount that tyrant of society, popular prejudice, and pursue the path of sincerity and duty unflinchingly. There was a feeling moved her more akin to noble souls, than the fear of what men would say. She knew the kind and loving heart of the old Colonel would be deeply hurt by every bitter thrust society might make at her.

Her father never flinched from braving everything blind and infuriated zealots directed at himself; but when his darling child, the only comfort of his old age, was assailed, it cut deeply to his very heart; and though the old warrior never would succumb, she knew he suffered perfect agony for her. Even when she dared to be seen entering the dwelling of a papist, such a storm of scandal and malignity swept over the old man's head, that he would exclaim, with tears in his eyes, "'Tis a burning shame, my child, for Christians to act thus, but we won't forsake poor Clarke and Agnes for the raving of such narrow-minded dogs, will we, Mary?"

Though these feelings crowded upon her mind, occasioning such misery to her dutiful and loving heart, they did not for an instant swerve her from her purpose. They were only sent from God to make her sacrifice still greater and more acceptable to Him. And with these thoughts came others of the mysterious Church which now stood before her proffering to her its mighty arms and saying kindly, yet solemnly, "Come;" and its deep voice seemed to issue from the indistinct and ivy-bound altars of ages long since gone. She was standing as yet before its portals, and gazing upon its massive structure, and it seemed to her as if the heavy masonry were growing firmer every instant as the increasing superstructure pressed it more heavily upon the rock which sustained it at the base. And then she fancied holy angels were hovering above the portals and pointing her to the purifying font through which the soul must pass to the embrace of God. Clasping her hands in grateful prayer, she blessed the Eternal Name that the delusive veil of pride had been torn from her before her eyes; that as a little child she might penetrate the secrets of the

temple, and wonder at the unfathomable mysteries and the boundless tenderness of Almighty God As she sat thus absorbed in thought, alternately sad and joyful, the Indian girl stole into the room with her usual noiseless step and took the low seat beside her mistress. Mary turned to her instantly and said, "Cecily, do you love me?"

"Oh, yes, Miss Mary," replied the girl, looking up in her mistress' face with that peculiarly devoted expression her countenance invariably assumed in addressing Mary.

"What is the greatest blessing you could wish for your mistress, Cecily?"

The girl seemed anxious to reply; but something deterred her, and she looked silently out upon the sky.

"Would you be happy, Cecily, if I should become a Catholic?" inquired Mary, imagining this wish was in the girl's mind, but that fear of offending her mistress kept her silent.

Cecily turned her large black eyes eagerly toward Mary's face, and replied, quickly, "God give Miss Mary grace, and Cecily be so happy."

"Well, Cecily, I shall be a Catholic very soon

—much sooner than you have any idea of; but you must be perfectly silent."

The girl looked at her intently for an instant, and then drew from her bosom a small crucifix, which Mary had never seen before, and held it out to her mistress. Mary pressed it to her lips, and Cecily was entirely satisfied of her sincerity. Yes, the papists numbered one more idolater!

CHAPTER VI.

The heavy clang of the nine-o'clock bell had just died away as a figure, closely muffled, issued from the doorway of Colonel Sidney's dwelling which opened into the garden. Carefully locking the door behind her and removing the key, she placed it beneath the door-step, and then stole quietly through the garden into a lane running in the rear of the house. The figure was Mary Sidney, on her way to the house of the priest. At the extremity of the narrow lane, and a few rods from her father's dwelling, she discovered the person who was waiting for her walking up and down the street to keep himself warm, for the freezing blast of a December night was sweeping across the island. In a few seconds he was at her side, and proved to be Harry Clarke himself. He said to her immediately, in a low voice, "Do not speak a word, Miss Mary, on the way, for I believe two men have been following me ever

since I left home, and may be watching us now."

She made no reply but a simple "No!" and wrapping her shawl more closely about her, took his arm, and they moved as rapidly toward the common as her newly acquired strength would allow.

The novelty of being clandestinely away from her father's house at night, and traversing the streets of the city upon the arm of a hunted and outcast priest, was so contrary to all the experience and ideas of her former life, that Mary Sidney wondered if this affair were not the illusion of a strange dream.

Fortunately, their walk was not a long one, and in a few moments the almost tottering form of Mary was clasped in the arms of her gentle friend Agnes. Her heavy shawl and mantle were removed, and the shivering invalid cheered by the welcome blaze of a large fire. Then did Harry grasp the hand of Mary, attenuated by her long-continued illness, and greet her with his thrilling words of kindness and sympathy for the first time in nearly six months. How many unforeseen occurrences since their last meeting

on the day of the fatal ride were discussed by the reunited friends, and how many mutual hopes and fears had just sprung into life to cement their bond of union and make the three inseparable in heart for evermore.

"Now, Mary," said Agnes, at length, "if you are warmed and rested sufficiently, Harry will explain to you the sequel of his request, at parting with you in June."

"Oh, yes," exclaimed Mary; "tell me the reason of the mysterious whisper which has been so long unsolved."

"Come, then," replied Harry, after securing the fastening of the door through which they had entered; and he led the way up to his library, on the second floor.

Mary followed them mechanically, so amazed was she at the movement, not having anticipated anything besides some trivial communication regarding Harry Clarke's escape, or something of that nature which he had not deemed it expedient for her father to hear. How was her amazement increased when Harry paused before the door of his library and gave a peculiar rap, which brought some person inside to unlock it.

Following Agnes into the room, she was confronted by a tall and finely-formed man, who immediately presented his hand to her and said, earnestly, "My preserver! now I can offer you the gratitude so long deferred. God knows how deeply and fervently I bless you for your goodness; but you appear astonished," he exclaimed; "is it possible you do not recognize me, Miss Mary?"

Bewildered at this singular greeting of an entire stranger, whose voice was nevertheless familiar to her, she could only exclaim, "Agnes, tell me who this is, and what this dress means," pointing to the long cassock of the stranger.

"Why, Mary," exclaimed Agnes and Harry in a breath, "don't you recognize the priest?"

"What priest?" inquired Mary, still more confused.

"Why, the priest you screened from the police," exclaimed Harry, astounded at her ignorance—"John Bowers—my coachman! Can't you recognize him?"

As the name of the servant fell upon her ear, the singular mistake flashed instantly through her mind, and she exclaimed, "Then

Mr. Clarke is not the priest, and I have been all wrong—oh! what a complete disguise!"

There had, indeed, been a singular misunderstanding throughout the whole affair, for Mary, naturally enough, identified Harry Clarke as the owner of the lost cassock, never dreaming that the servant was the disguised priest. She had spoken of the priest to Agnes in such a manner, that she, too, was blinded to the error; and Mary's long illness had prevented her from coming in contact with the servant, who was the illustrious Father Ury himself.

When the surprise had subsided and the mystery was clearly elucidated to all, Mary scanned the noble figure of the outlawed ecclesiastic, who stood calmly before her with folded arms, apparently amused at the curiosity depicted in her countenance. He was full six feet in height, and his figure indicated great strength of muscle, while the broad white forehead evinced the resources of a powerful intellect beneath. There was no trace of the servant remaining, with the exception of the quick and restless hazel eye and the powerful frame, for the coarse black wig was removed, and the short brown hair carelessly

brushed back from the temples. The long, dark cassock was buttoned nearly to the feet, barely trailing upon the floor, while a small silver crucifix was suspended from his neck by a simple black cord.

"You have never encountered a priest before, Miss Mary," he said, smiling at the glances she cast upon his dress.

"No," she replied, quickly, "it was my misfortune to be born among fanatics, who taught me to regard a glimpse of a Catholic priest as the worst misfortune which could happen to me —something very like the devil," she added, laughing.

"I have a perfect appreciation of that kind of discipline, Miss Mary," he said, "for I was myself educated a Calvinist of the fiercer stamp, but, through the grace of Almighty God, I am now a servant of that same Old Lady of Abominations, as these new sects style the old faith. But you have come to me, Miss Mary, as a postulant for the favors of Holy Mother the Church, so Agnes tells me."

"Yes," replied Mary, "I have left error and confusion behind me, and with all my heart ac-

knowledge the claims of the Church. Will you not receive me?"

There was a depth of pathos and sincerity in the poor invalid's sweet voice which touched Father Ury's heart, and when he replied his tones were singularly gentle and tremulous, for her voice recalled to him the memory of the long-haired sleeper in the desolate ravine.

"Yes, my dear child, the arms of the Holy Spouse of Christ are ever open to receive the penitent wanderer; but you must know the rudiments of the faith before you can receive admission to the sacraments of the Church." Then turning to the Clarke, he added: "Harry, you or Agnes had better go below while I instruct Miss Mary, so that you can give me intimation if any of those prowlers you noticed watching you when you came should have suspected something, and attempt to enter the house."

"I will go," said Harry, starting up, "and if any one comes I will make Ring bark for you; but be as brief as possible to-night, Father Ury, for my being in the street at that time with a muffled figure might bring the officers here if they heard of it."

When he had gone, the priest drew a large arm chair up to the table near which Mary and Agnes were sitting. Resting his head upon his hand, and addressing himself to Mary, he said, "I must commence at first principles, as I would in instructing a child, Miss Mary. The Holy Cath olic Church does not admit that postulants for baptism are either theologians, or have passed through any marvellous 'interior illuminations,' or have experienced any wonderful flashes of 'gospel light,' but are simple children, who have heard the narration of the wonderful tale of Calvary, and are come to learn of the Church which has preserved it, and transmitted it from age to age, if it be indeed authentic, and what are its necessary deductions and teachings for them. The Church says to them, that this Being who came from the bosom of the Eternal Father proved his claim to Divinity by the performance of miracles which no human being could perform, and before his ascent into heaven organized a form of government for all time, which all men were bound to obey under the pain of his displeasure. This hierarchy, thus established, says to you, my child, there are three persons in the Godhead

equal in power and glory: the Father, existing from all eternity; the Son, begotten of the Father from all eternity; and the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son from all eternity, and this is to be believed whether the reason can comprehend it or not, simply because the Church teaches it, which is the voice of God, who cannot lie. The Church further teaches that the Son, by the power of the Holy Ghost, was conceived of a woman named Mary, and was born of her in the form of a man, and suffered death upon the cross at the hands of men, whom his death would enable to obtain eternal life if they followed the directions and believed the teachings of this Church which he established to guide them. This Church requires you to recite the Creed, which is a condensed form of faith, and to believe it on the authority of the Church alone, which is the 'pillar and ground of truth.' You are required to learn the seven Sacraments by name, and to show that each of them possesses the two requisites of a sacrament: an outward sign and an internal grace communicated. You must also know the Ten Commandments of God, and the

precepts of the Church, and, finally, you must love the Church, obey the Church, and, if need be, die for the Church, for it is the anchor of hope and the standard of faith given by Almighty God as the only effectual guide to heaven. When you have a correct idea of these truths, gleaned from the catechism Agnes will give you, you will receive conditional baptism; that is, the form of baptism which is efficacious only on condition that you were not properly baptized in the Established Church of England, for baptism can only once be administered. If it were certain that you had not been validly baptized before, no confession of your past sins would be necessary to enable you to approach the communion of the Blessed Sacrament, for baptism cleanses not only from original, but actual sin committed before it. Inasmuch, then, as your case is doubtful, you will prepare yourself to make a general confession of all the sins of your past life which with care and diligence you can recall; and after your baptism I will, by the power of the keys committed to the Church, absolve you. You must remember, my dear child, that you come to the tribunal of penance, not before human

judges, but into the presence of the eternal God. If you conceal a sinful thought, word, or action intentionally, or if you are not sincerely grieved for your sins, you may hear the priest pronounce the words of absolution, but the pardon of God will not accompany them. The power of absolv ing is given only when there is sincere contrition for sin; and though the priest may be deceived, Almighty God cannot be. And now, my dear child, Agnes will provide you with the Catechism I mentioned, which you should study thoroughly; for if the foundation of your faith is well laid, you will hereafter comprehend more readily the mysteries of our holy religion. You will be amazed, by and by, to find every department of research confirming you daily in your faith. The holy Scriptures, history, and ethics will continually make the faith appear brighter and clearer to you, and prove that Church to be divine which the storms and revolutions of more than seventeen centuries have only settled more firmly on its foundations. And now, my dear child, you have chosen persecution and abuse; your motives will be misrepresented by the world, for no sincerity is ever allowed to converts from

Protestantism; but you have faith where those who protest against the Church have only opinion; you will kneel before an altar, they before a table only. May God bless you and keep especial watch over you, for in his name you have defied all the hatred and malignity of this Province. Have you understood entirely what I have thus far said to you?"

"Oh, yes," replied Mary; "for many of these principles were familiar to me before, though I had not then sufficient authority for believing them. But will I be safe if sudden death should come upon me before I am baptized?"

"Do not trouble yourself about that, my child, for your sincere determination to embrace the Church, and follow her precepts, has given you the protection of her arm against the wrath of God; and if you die with an earnest desire for baptism you are acceptable to Him who looks upon the heart. If, however, you should indeed be obliged to leave the city very soon, I will receive you at any moment of urgent necessity." Then turning to Miss Clarke, he said: "Agnes, you can arrange with Miss Mary in regard to attending mass, for her absence

from the Protestant church will occasion suspicion after awhile; and also inform her when to recognize me as——"

He suddenly paused, for his eye caught a glimpse of a face just raised above the window sill looking directly at him through the glass, but before he could speak the face disappeared. He said, quickly, "Take up a book, Agnes, and read to Miss Mary, for I have been seen, and the officers will be here soon. Don't exhibit any agitation, if you can avoid it."

In one instant he sprang toward a corner of the room, and tearing off his cassock thrust it into a drawer beneath the library; and in a few seconds the servant's coat replaced it, and the heavy wig was drawn over his high forehead. Before the two girls could utter a word of surprise at this unaccountable movement, the servant had vanished through the door. Agnes, familiar with such scenes, quickly recovered her presence of mind, and ran to the library for a book, which she hastily placed upon the table beside Mary, and began to read aloud. Scarcely had the first words passed her lips when Harry Clarke rushed in, exclaiming, "Some one saw Father Ury

through that window. Give me his seat; quick, Agnes, and sit just where you were a minute ago. How was he sitting when he was talking to you," he continued, seating himself in Father Ury's chair.

"Rest your head on your hand—so," said Mary, giving him the exact position the priest had occupied.

"Now talk to me," said he, "in a perfectly calm tone, so that your voices will be natural and composed when they come; but I will do all the talking with them, unless they question you. We shall baffle them yet," he added, laughing to reassure the girls.

"Why, Harry," said Agnes, "how could any one see through that window, so high from the ground?"

"They must have put up a ladder or something of that kind," he answered; "but keep perfectly calm, and don't take your eyes off me, for there is a face just now looking in—that's right, look directly at me, and don't start or turn toward the window—there are two faces now looking in. There! they are gone now—but don't look, for they may come again."

He sat facing the window, so that his eyes seemed to the persons outside to be looking at the two females who sat with their back to it, and the spies evidently imagined he did not observe them. But he saw every movement quite distinctly, and counted four different heads appear in succession at the window; yet his calm and warning tones restrained any demonstration of alarm or consciousness on the part of Agnes and Mary, who gazed directly in his face while their hearts throbbed louder and louder each instant. For several moments after they had disappeared he continued talking, and at length began to indulge the hope that they had left the house altogether. But, no; a loud knocking was heard below, and then immediately the unbolting of the door by the servant. In a few seconds John appeared at the door of the library and informed his master that two police officers desired to see him.

"Police officers?" inquired Harry, in a tone sufficiently loud for the men below to hear.

"Yes, sir," replied John.

"What can they want with me? but show them up to the library, John."

The next moment the heavy tramp of the men was heard ascending the stairs.

"Be guarded now," whispered Harry across the table; and immediately John ushered in the policemen. One of them stepped forward and said, gruffly, "There is strong suspicion, sir! of a popish priest being in this house, and we have a warrant to arrest him."

"And pray, sir, who sent you on such an errand?" exclaimed Harry; "do you not know that no priest of the Catholic Church is allowed to put his foot across the borders of this Province without subjecting himself to perpetual imprisonment?"

"That's all very well, sir, for you to say, who know as well as I do that all the laws in Christendom would'nt keep one of them priests out if he thought he'd ought to come, and I'd swear on the Bible I saw one in this room to-night."

"Do you mean to say," exclaimed Harry, in surprise, "that you have been in this room to-night without my knowledge, and seen a priest here? And why didn't you arrest him?"

"I might have been here without your seeing me, for you've been out to-night," replied the

man; "but I suppose I'd better tell the whole story, and then you'll give him up without my taking the trouble to search the house. The fact is, Mr. Clarke, you've been seen bringing some one into the house disguised like a woman, and I suspected right away you'd got a priest that's been about here some months dressed up in that way; so I kept still till you'd got him in the house, and then I put up a ladder and looked in, and there he was sure enough, sitting in that chair of yourn, talking to them ladies. I hurried off to get some help; but when they came and looked in, he'd gone, and you was sitting in his place. Now, Mr. Clarke, you see I know what I'm about, and if you give him up quietly, well and good; but if you deny he's here, I'll have to search the house from top to bottom but I'll find him."

"Well," replied Harry, gaily, "you may search the house, but you won't find the priest; and as to your mysterious woman, there she is (pointing to Mary). Perhaps you are not acquainted with her, but she is the daughter of Colonel Sidney, and it was she whom I conducted here to-night."

"Well," said the man, somewhat surprised to find the disguised woman so readily accounted for, that's very likely, for you started somewhere about Colonel Sidney's house; but, then, how do you account for the priest I saw in that chair? for see him I did, and I'd be willing to swear to it."

"Yes," said Harry, laughing, "and I suppose five minutes ago you would have been willing to swear that Miss Sidney was a disguised priest." Then he added, more seriously, "You may search the house, but I will make an assertion as large as your own, and that is, that to my knowledge there has not been besides my family a person of any description except Miss Sidney and you two men in this house to-night."

"And whom do you call your family," demanded the policeman.

"Myself and my sister and my two servants," replied Harry.

The officer turned quickly to Agnes, and fixing his eye sternly upon her, said, "And will you assert the same, miss."

"Yes," said Agnes, firmly.

"And will you, Miss Sidney?"

Mary nodded assent.

"Well, I may have been mistaken, but my warrant requires me to search, so I shall have to do it. Will you accompany me, sir?"

"No," said Harry, indignantly. "John, you go around with them."

"The servant turned to lead them from the room, but the man immediately called him back, "Not so fast, sir; we must examine this room first."

Carefully inspecting every part of the library which might conceal a secret door, and even looking beneath the table where Harry was sitting, they at length passed through the door at the end of the room into a smaller room adjoining, which underwent the same thorough investigation. Thus the entire house was inspected by these curious officials; but not the slightest evidence appeared that a priest had ever entered it. John conducted them everywhere, opening doors and making himself generally useful; but it was all in vain, and, finally, one of the policemen exclaimed, "It's no use hunting any longer for that popish scoundrel, and, maybe, I was wrong after all; but I vow Mr. Clarke did'nt

look like the first one I saw in the chair; but then, somehow, he was sitting the same way too, leaning on his hand. Look here, you John, if you'll show us this priest, we'll make it more profitable for you than driving horses. Come, now, we'll pay you well."

"I'd not object to higher wages, gentlemen; but when Mr. Clarke says there's no man been here but his family, he's apt to be right. I never heard him tell false yet; and then if one of the good priests did come here, I'm not the man to tell about it."

"You're an obstinate knave," muttered the man, as he prepared to leave the house with his comrade.

When they passed out, John heard one of them say, "Have you seen anybody come out Dick?"

"Not a soul," replied a new voice; "but come along; we're half frozen."

They had stationed a guard outside to prevent any egress of the priest whom they had been so sure of, and John could hear them cursing at the policeman who had kept them standing out in the cold and dismal blast on a false

alarm. When their voices had died away in the distance, the servant hastened to inform the party in the library that all danger had passed by and they might breath freely once more. The three had scarcely spoken during the search but sat motionless, listening to every noise the police men made in ransacking the house, when the men approached the library there was for a moment intense anxiety lest they should open the drawer and discover the cassock; but the officials were looking for more substantial game than dress, and this clue remained unnoticed.

"We are safe once more, thank God!" said John, as he appeared at the door of the library; "but hereafter we shall require incessant caution, for that man is confident that he saw a strange face through the window! Then turning to Miss Sidney, he said: "Miss Mary, it will be better for you not to come here again in the evening till the rumor of this affair has died away, but if Agnes will come for you in the carriage, we can drive out of the city and continue our conversation unobserved. It will appear novel to you, no doubt, to be instructed by your driver; but Almighty God can enlighten

the heart as well beneath the dome of heaven as under the arches of the cathedral church."

"That is indeed the safest plan," said Agnes; "I wonder we did not think of it before."

"But," said Mary, deeply moved to think of the humiliating situation of one so noble and gifted, "I shall be grieved to see you thus, when it is rather my duty to serve and obey you."

"You must overcome this feeling, my dear child; I know it comes from the depth of your kind heart; but I have chosen to be the especial servant of God, and these things I believe trouble me very little Oh, my God!" he exclaimed, with deep pathos, "can such trifling annoyances deter me from the service when thy own precious body poured forth its bloody sweat for me! No, no; let me die even rather than desert these poor outcast children of thine.——But, Harry, it is very late, and we forget the invalid has a bitter storm to encounter without."

"We must go immediately," said Mary, "for that prying aunt of mine might possibly go to my room, and then there would be a tempest indeed."

"Come, then," said Harry; and in a few mo-

ments they were traversing the streets again, which were now clear of the police. Mary entered her father's dwelling silently and unnoticed, save by the watchful Indian girl.

CHAPTER VII.

On the day following Mary's discovery of the real priest, she applied herself diligently to learn the contents of the little book with which Agnes had provided her. Her clear perception of the necessity of an infallible hierarchy, suggested by her examination of the claims of the Catholic Church, and her anxiety for a speedy baptism, enabled her to embrace the first principles of the faith with great facility. While she was imbibing truths with the docility of a child, and endeavoring to comprehend why she had lived so blindly, and so unconscious of the amazing prodigy of an institution surviving every human organization, and still moving on majestically amid the mouldering ruins of the most potent empires, and only strengthened by the furious assaults directed against its ancient battlements, the day had glided away and the hour of her father's return had arrived. She heard his firm step in the hall, and then, contrary to his usual

custom, he ascended the stairs and knocked at her door. Knowing the soldier-like precision of his movements, and that he never transgressed it except on extraordinary occasions, she felt assured the old Colonel had something unusually interesting to communicate. She hastened to admit him, and the instant her eye met his countenance she saw it was very grave and troubled. When they were seated, he asked immediately if the report which was flying about the town was correct—that she had been seen at the house of Harry Clarke the previous night in company with a popish priest.

Mary replied, instantly, "I went, father, with Mr. Clarke to the house, and was sitting in the library with him and Agnes when the police searched it."

"A very cunningly worded answer, Mary," he said; "and it was no doubt dictated by the honest desire not to compromise your friends—that is a trait of character worthy of a Sidney, and I love you for it, my child. But this is the reason why I question you, not to elicit from you any trust or secret of honor, but to know if you are a papist yourself."

The critical moment had now arrived which Mary had anticipated, and she shuddered to think what a pang her answer would inflict upon the old man beside her when he heard from her own lips the confirmation of his suspicion that they no more could have communion or sympathy of faith, or indulge the mutual hope of heaven.

"Jesus and Mary help me," quivered on her lip; and so quickly was the prayer responded to, that before the last syllable had died away a sudden energy inspired her soul, and she said, quickly, "Father, by the grace of God, I shall be a Catholic, though I am not yet baptized."

For a moment the eye of the old man was fixed intently upon her, then quickly his head dropped upon her shoulder, and she felt his frame quiver with intense agony as he attempted to speak; but he could not articulate a word for several minutes. At length the spirit of the old soldier returned to him, and his fine eye blazed with its accustomed fire as he drew his martial figure proudly to its full height and said, almost fiercely, "Creeds shall make no difference to me, Mary, where you are concerned. You

never took any deliberate step except from principle and conviction, and though I think you in error, I will die first but I'll defend you, my darling child, against all the combined fury of this fanatical city. But when was this determination made, Mary?"

"When I discovered, father, that the basis of your faith was man, and not God, and that our Saviour made no provision for the time when his Church should lose its authority and claim to be heard and should become too corrupt to guide men."

"Well, Mary," he replied, "we won't dispute about theological questions; but there will be a furious storm if your aunt hears of this before her departure."

"And when does she go?" inquired Mary, eagerly.

"She is going home in a few days, Mary, for I concluded not to visit Albany with her this winter."

"Then, father, I shall be perfectly happy, for I feared you would go, and thus deprive me of the society of the Clarkes and the exercise of my new faith."

"If you had informed me of this change, Mary, I should have declined the invitation immediately on your account. You should have treated me with more confidence," he added, reproachfully.

"Indeed I would have disclosed to you everything, father, without fear of betraying any one, but I knew you would be so grieved that I should have adopted the old faith against which you feel bound to protest, and I hesitated till this moment to wound you by informing you of it."

"You will find it better, my dear child, to intrust all things to your father, and be assured I shall not suffer my religious prejudices to make me forget that whatever you believe is the result of your sincere convictions, and that my papist daughter has as cogent claims upon my love as when she was a Protestant."

He spoke with such depth of tenderness and affection for his child, that Mary was deeply moved, and could only say, "I thank God that I shall not then be all alone and estranged from my own flesh and blood. Do not think, my dear father, that I could thus disgrace you in

the eyes of the world if my conscience did not impel me to it."

"I know you love me, Mary, with all the depth of your sincere heart; but I shall be furious when such men as that hypocritical John Billman denounces you from the pulpit. As for the clergy of the Establishment, they have too great sense of propriety to mention individuals, and will only caution the laity against the approaches of Rome in a general way."

"But, father, these are only trifling annoyances," interposed Mary.

"But, my dear child, I cannot tamely submit to hear them all circulate venomous stories about you, and I fear my old frontier blood may boil over sometimes, like that of Harry Clarke when he upset that pious peacock on board ship."

"Hush! father, there comes aunt," whispered Mary, quickly, as the tall figure of the Colonel's sister appeared in the open door.

But the warning came too late, for the ear of the stately lady caught the unflattering epithet of her exemplary pastor, and she instantly exclaimed, "Why, brother, it pains me to hear you call that holy servant of the Lord a pious pea

oock, who stands as a faithful sentinel on the watch-towers of Zion to challenge the enemies of evangelical purity."

"If John Billman is your model of evangelical purity," replied the Colonel, bluntly, "I fear you Dissenters will need a 'refreshing season' before long."

"And has he not," she exclaimed, furiously, "proved his right to be called an evangelist by boldly confronting the beast?—did he not warn Mary, at the ball, of the popish tempter, and call that deluded cousin of the Governor the devil's own decoy? Mark, George Sidney, how like an inspired prophet he spoke; and now there is the fulfillment," she said, triumphantly pointing at Mary Sidney. "Yes, your own daughter steals out by night to listen to the serpent hiss of a popish priest; and now she's lost for ever! Would to God the police might find this Jesuit viper, and roast the venomous soul out of his body."

"And this you call the evangelical teaching of your holy apostle John Billman?" replied the Colonel, bitterly.

"I have no question, aunt," interrupted Mary,

"that your private interpretation of Scripture authorizes your charitable zeal for burning papists by the score!"

"Yes," she replied, "the holy Book teems with instances of the destruction of the enemies of God's people by the hand of his servants; but it were useless to cite them now to you, poor tool of the corrupt Babylon. Oh, George, how often have I warned you that your forms and ceremonies tended to popery, and that some day you would curse your folly in allowing Mary to see the picture of a cross!"

"Or to hear of one either, I suppose," he shouted after the retiring figure of the zealous saint. "I believe the very devil has got into this city lately," he muttered, as the footsteps of the self-constituted Judith died away.

"I think his advent was not very recent here," said Mary, laughing.

"How can you laugh so, my child, when the whole city is waiting to have a howl at you the moment you appear?"

"I only know, father," she replied, "that since God gave me grace to abjure opinion and embrace faith, I feel very happy and light-hearted, so that

the conduct or regard of this world makes little impression upon me."

"And has your former independence of character been still more strengthened by your faith?" he inquired, curiously.

"Oh, yes, father, a thousand-fold," she answered, with fervor; "and now I know any frightful disease, or death itself, could be encountered without one doubt I should have had as a Protestant, that possibly I might be mistaken in supposing my Church better than any other. It is this assurance that there is a Church infallible in teaching religious truth, and that to die obeying its commands is certain salvation, that sends the Catholic priest to countries inaccessible to others, and make him prize death as an inestimable blessing, and the severest obstacles as precious assistance from Almighty God to follow in the footsteps of his Master. You cannot understand this faith without being a Catholic, and having once known it, you would never wish to exchange it for the right of interpreting the mysteries of redemption by fallible and conceited private opinion."

"Well, Mary," he replied, "it seems to me this

system of yours induces a servile submission to men who are no better than yourself, and certainly as liable to fall into error."

"There, father, is the fallacy of those who misrepresent the Catholic Church, for the submission in matters of faith is not to one man, but to the decision of the collective body of teachers united with one head, and the fallibility of one teacher is restrained by the voice of the Church, which is the 'pillar and ground of truth.'"

"On some other occasion, my child, I will candidly examine your arguments, and if you can convince me that you are right, you know very well that I am not afraid to break through old habits and ideas to follow up my convictions of truth and justice. But, Mary," he added, turning to leave, "you have aroused the fiend of this Province against you."

Mary Sidney could scarcely realize the extent of that old man's devotedness to her as she listened to his measured tramp down the staircase.

"Is it possible," she said to herself, "that he does not consider me unworthy of all affection and confidence since I have embraced that detested old Church? Oh, father, you are the

boldest old veteran that ever marshalled a forlorn-hope!"

At this instant Cecily entered the room with a note for her mistress, and Mary detected the faintest trace of a smile upon the usually placid countenance of the Indian girl. The handwriting was new to her, and she immediately asked, "Who brought this?"

"John Bowers," replied Cecily.

Mary hastily tore open the note, but the signature was not the priest's, as she supposed, but that of Harry Clarke. Cecily kept her eyes on the countenance of her mistress as she read, and saw first wonderment steal over it, and then intense joy as she approached the conclusion of the note. Mary slowly folded it again and turned to Cecily, but the servant had vanished; and she rested her head upon her hand while conflicting emotions flitted across her eloquent face like the transitions of sunshine and cloud. One feeling, however, was predominant, and finally chased away every shadow as her quick apprehension unravelled the former mystery, and Mary Sidney experienced for a few moments tranquil and unalloyed happiness

The long-suppressed dream of the heart was now unveiled before her, and her sacrifice of friends and society at the noble altar of principle and duty was to receive even a temporal reward. The fearless resolution to combat the waves of unrelenting bigotry and scorn had opened to her the portals of a heart which else would have been for ever unknown to her. With especial gratification did she contemplate the fact that there had been no encouragement of her own affection till she had resolved to embrace the Catholic faith, and that she had supposed her love for Harry Clarke entirely hopeless, under the impression that he was the disguised priest. She had now no suggestion of conscience to trouble her, that perhaps her motives in joining the proscribed papists were not sincerely those of one who seeks the Church for truth's sake alone. Harry had offered her his hand in his own manly way, assuring her that his sense of propriety and duty as a Catholic had not suffered him to indulge the desire of possessing her, until the delightful moment when Agnes made him acquainted with her abjuration of Protestantism. It was this affection for her which obliged him

to shun her society so frequently; for the Church insists upon her children avoiding as much as possible the object which allures to a violation of her wishes and precepts. He acknowledged to her, that no action or manner of any kind had betrayed on her part the slightest affection for him beyond that of a friend, but he would cherish the hope, nevertheless, that she would grant the precious treasure of her affection, which, after his faith, he prized above every earthly blessing.

Mary could adopt no other course than to accept the offer, for he realized her ideal of noble-hearted manhood; and from their meeting on board the Queen Anne until the reception of his note she never entertained for an instant the idea of ever loving any but Harry Clarke. She felt confident from the scene with her father a few moments before, that the high-souled Colonel would not object to Harry on account of his being an outcast papist, and she knew his chivalric bearing and his cordial heart had now the esteem of the veteran soldier from their first acquaintance. She resolved to submit the contents of the note to her father for his assent, that in her reply she might inform Harry that all

possible difficulties were removed, and that the father and daughter alike were proud to receive him into their family and their hearts.

With this intention she descended to the library of the Colonel with a joyful step, and immediately delivered to him Harry's note with as calm and business-like an air as her palpitating heart allowed her to assume. Colonel Sidney glanced over the note, and without the least symptom of surprise at its contents said, kindly, "I have long anticipated something of this nature, Mary, for I have observed Clarke's manner on several occasions, and have felt assured he was endeavoring to conceal the extent of his regard for you. I admire his noble heart and the integrity of his character, and I believe you might search the world through and not discover a man more worthy of your love. He will be a protection to you against the abuse you must expect to encounter as a convert to the persecuted Church; or, rather, he will enable you to sustain it, and to be happy in spite of it. But, my dearest child," he said, placing his hand upon her head affectionately, "you must never be separated from your old father, for this world

would be utterly cheerless and desolate without without you."

"Oh, my dear father," she replied, looking up into his face with that peculiar smile of her own which cheered every one toward whom it was directed like a glance of sunshine, "I could not leave you either, and indeed there is no necessity for this—the two families united would make but four persons, and we should be perfectly happy together. But, father," she added quickly, as if an unthought-of difficulty had arisen suddenly to her recollection, "you are a Protestant, and living with a Catholic family would involve you in their disgrace—you would be suspected of privately countenancing papists, and, perhaps, of being one yourself, and thus would be deprived of your seat in the Assembly and the confidence of your constituents."

"Leave me to arrange that, Mary," he replied; "the probability is, I shall not consent to sit in the Assembly again in the spring, for I am weary of so much excitement and business, and long for quiet and retirement in my declining years. However, if they attempt to interfere with you, I shall not desist from fighting them,

merely for the sake of quiet and peace, for I shall die game, Mary. It shall never be said, that George Sidney declined the defence of the persecuted and down-trodden, or truckled to the narrow and unchristian prejudices of shallow-brained parsons and fanatical old women."

"I trust, my dear father, that, by and by, when you have learned the reasons of my strange step, and entered into that candid examination which you promised to undertake at some future day, you will defend us not only from a sense of justice to the oppressed, but also because you feel convinced of our superior claim to be considered reasonable in following out the precepts of the Divine Teacher, and holding his cheering promises of purity and light to be perpetual to the end of time."

"Now, Mary," he said, anxious to avoid anything like discussion, "I would advise you to reply directly to Harry's note, and request him to come over here to-night. There are some things necessary to be considered between us all, and the sooner we are able to comprehend our exact position and arrange our plans the better it will be for us."

"I will send a note by Cecily immediately," she said, rising to go; "but, father, do not mention this subject to aunt now, for she will be so furious about it that we shall all be miserable till she leaves the city."

"Very well, my child," he answered, laughing, "I will spare you the storm."

Mary hastened to her room; and when her materials for writing were prepared, she sat down at the table with the expectation of writing a very hasty answer. But the novelty of addressing Harry by note for the first time, and that, too, upon the most interesting subject to a woman's heart, made her hesitate and commence anew several times. There were so many reflections crowding upon her mind, and so many things she wished to say to him, that a full half hour was consumed in indecision and tearing up half-written notes. Her hand, too, trembled occasionally, and the words so irregularly scrawled she feared would indicate to him too much of the real state of her heart, so that he would know it all at once, and not prize her as much as he would if she gradually developed to him the fondness and intensity of her affection,

so that a new note must be written to conceal this agitation. At length in despair at her failures, she grasped the pen once more, and wrote hastily these brief lines.

"Dear Harry:

"I received your note, and I love you as you desire. Come to the house the first moment you have leisure. MARY."

CHAPTER VIII.

The morning of the first of January, 1741, was piercingly cold. The furious storm of the preceding night had gradually subsided, and at the hour of four the atmosphere was of that clear and intense chilliness which penetrates almost instantly the frame of one who issues from the protection of a warm home. While the citizens of New York were slumbering quietly in their comfortable beds, not even dreaming of rising for at least two hours, a scene was transacting in the house of Harry Clarke the slightest intimation of which would have aroused many of the sleepers and sent them forth into the dark and frozen streets with alacrity and fiendish delight. In the room adjoining the library, and communicating with it by a door, were assembled fifteen or twenty persons, all kneeling before a temporary altar, upon which burned the two wax tapers of the Catholic

service, emblematic of the light of faith revealed to the Jew and Gentile. They were all persons in the lowest ranks of life, who had stolen out at this early hour under cover of the darkness to receive once more the consolations of their faith, and testify before Almighty God their devotion to his holy Church amid the jeers and banded fury of his enemies.

The only quite young person in the number was the little blue-eyed Ursula, who knelt close beside one corner of the altar, and was praying with her eyes directed to the crucifix which hung above the tabernacle. One would scarcely have recognized the starving beggar-child in the beautiful creature quietly repeating her rosary and entirely motionless save when the tiny blue-veined hand passed slowly to the next bead.

In a few moments the vested figure of Father Ury appeared at the door opening into the library, and turning to some one behind him demanded in his clear voice, "What seekest thou of the Church of God?"

"Faith," replied Mary Sidney, in a firm tone.

"And what will faith give thee?"

"Eternal life," she answered again.

Leading the postulant to the foot of the altar by the end of his stole, he performed the accustomed ceremonial of the Church, and then administered to the convert conditional baptism. When the rite was finished, and he had pronounced the absolution consequent to her confession, she kneeled among the assembled Catholics with Agnes and Harry Clarke.

After addressing a few words of caution to the Catholics in regard to any acknowledgment of a priest having baptized Mary Sidney, Father Ury proceeded to the Sacrifice of the Mass, Harry Clarke assisting him as acolyte. Mary Sidney, attentive to the progress of the holy mysteries, and drinking in rich draughts of perfect joy and peace from the long-sought fountain of truth, experienced that intense rapture which the amazing love of Christ provides for those who with childlike sincerity embrace his teachings, and with undoubting souls approach his Blessed Sacrament. When the holy communion had been administered, and she returned again among the humble worshippers, she felt there was indeed a strength in this panoply of the Church to resist successfully the allied assaults

of hell and earth, and shield the soul from danger even amid the blazing fires of persecution. No more did the millions of the children of the Church who had swept on gallantly to cruel death seem to her the poor victims of illusion for the childlike faith of the convert had flung back the portals of truth, and was gazing with holy fervor and delight upon the extended arms of that unfathomable love which so pleadingly invited the creature to the embrace of God.

Scarcely had the voice of the priest commenced the last gospel, when an unusual confusion in the room below fell upon his quick ear. His countenance for an instant assumed a deathly pallor, for he knew too well the occasion of the sound. Father Ury was betrayed! The next instant he calmly closed the book, and turning to his small flock, who also began to start up alarmed at the approaching footsteps, he said, with deep tenderness, "God bless you, my poor people, for you will now be scattered. I may never say Mass for you again, but pray for me, and remain firm in the old faith when I am gone."

He was interrupted by the crowd of police

men bursting in both doors simultaneously, and who raised a fierce howl of triumph as their eyes lighted on Father Ury. Harry had sprung to his feet to resist; but the instant he perceived heir overwhelming numbers, he exclaimed, uickly, to the half dozen men of the Catholic party who rushed before the priest to defend him, "Do'nt resist them, for it's entirely hopeless."

They fell back instantly at his command, knowing resistance must be indeed madness, since Harry Clarke would not hazard the life of his friend by arousing their frenzy. He was conscious the least opposition would have given a pretext for firing at Father Ury, whose death was their highest ambition. Scarcely were the words uttered when the lights were extinguished, and all were enveloped in total darkness. At the same instant Father Ury felt himself pulled backward several feet, and then a mantle was flung over his shoulders and a large hood drawn over his face, while the voice of Cecily whispered in his ear, "Father Ury, kneel down."

He instantly complied with her request, and she kneeled behind him to conceal his feet. The

confusion for a few moments was frightful. The officers grappled several persons fiercely in the darkness and called loudly for lights, while some of the females screamed with terror and struggled to escape from the room. But every avenue was strongly guarded, and in a few seconds the policemen outside the house rushed up the stairways and flung the broad glare of lanterns over the confused mass. Exclamations of disappointed fury rang through the room when the priest was found to be missing, and curses poured upon the foul fiend for spiriting away his own child. But no! the flash of Father Ury's vestments between the hastily-arranged folds of the mantle revealed their prey, and he was instantly dragged from the room amid the tears and expostulations of the poor Catholics, who clung to his garments and begged for his blessing.

Most of the Catholics followed the policemen from the house; but Agnes and Mary Sidney were almost paralyzed at the horrible scene, and sank into the chairs of the library utterly desolate and miserable at the loss of their noble-hearted and self-sacrificing friend. Harry Clarke had accompanied the rude and outrageous mob

to the door of the house as they bore away the priest after tearing off the mantle and hood with which the faithful Indian girl had nearly disguised him; but when they hurried him away into the freezing air, he shouted indignantly after them, "Are you fiends that you drag a man bareheaded and half-clothed through the streets on such a morning as this?"

He was answered only by the curses of the mob; and then the bold, clear voice of Father Ury was borne back to him, "God bless you, Harry."

Fortunately for the poor priest, the distance across the common to the prison was not very great, and Harry wondering at the bitter malignity of the men followed with his eye their receding figures as the fitful gleams of their lanterns gave them the appearance of fiends on some midnight tramp.

"This, then, is the development of their principle of private interpretation," he muttered; "this is the explanation of their boasted license of religious belief! Oh, what beautiful consistency!"

When the lights disappeared beyond the com-

mon as the policemen conducted their prisoner within the walls of the city jail, Harry slowly ascended the stairs to the library, where the two girls were lamenting bitterly the apprehension of their devoted father and friend. "Don't despair, my dear Mary," he said, tenderly raising her head from the table upon which it rested; "we may possibly contrive Father Ury's escape yet."

"No, no," she replied, hopelessly; "they would not suffer him to escape from their blind fanaticism even to save ten thousand souls! Do you think they find a popish priest every day to glut their piety?—no, no; the precious morsel will not escape their ravenous jaws till they have pressed out life itself!"

"I know that very well, Mary, and they will have ten thousand devils to aid them besides; but he may effect his escape nevertheless, by incessant labor and diligence; and we must remember that legions of heavenly spirits are with us to help us, if God wills it. But see how those villains have broken down our altar!" he exclaimed, pointing to the scene of the late confusion in the adjoining room.

The tabernacle was dashed to atoms, and the symbol of the crucifixion which had been suspended above it was flung contemptuously across the library as an idolatrous thing. As Harry and Mary entered the room for the purpose of collecting any of the sacred vessels used in the Sacrifice of the Mass, their eyes encountered the figure of poor little Ursula collecting the relics of the sacrilege and placing them in one corner. The little creature was pressing her lips to the chalice with the greatest veneration, which she had discovered; for she had already learned the sacredness of everything connected with this mystery of divine love. Tears were in her beautiful blue eyes, and when Mary appeared beside her, the child looked up in her face with such a touching expression of sorrow, that Mary, stooping down, pressed the cheek of the orphan to her own, and burst into tears.

"Will they kill uncle John?" Ursula asked, earnestly, striving vainly to suppress the large tears which trickled from her eyes.

"I cannot tell, my poor darling; but I think they will only confine him in a dungeon. You will pray for him with all your heart, will you

not, that God and the holy angels may comfort him in that dreadful place ?"

"Oh, yes, Miss Mary; I love to pray to Jesus and Mary for uncle John," the child replied, as the memory of her daily prayers came back to her little heart and lighted her countenance with the inspiration of an angel.

At this moment the voice of poor Agnes was heard in the library in the violent agony of her grief, and Mary hastily led the child to her, hoping the voice of her orphan charge might recall her to herself. "Here is Father Ury's niece, Agnes; think of the desolate child who is deprived of all her earthly relatives and try to comfort her."

"Oh! Mary," almost screamed the poor girl, "I have lost the holy messenger whom God sent to sustain my faltering heart and keep my eye fixed on the golden crown before me. He taught me to despise everything but God's service, and cheered my poor fainting courage by his own superhuman efforts for the suffering poor. When Harry wrestled with death itself, he watched by his bedside night after night when I could only aint from exhaustion, and hung over his pillow

like a mother or an angel through all the fierce throes of his wild agony. Oh, my God!" she murmured, falling upon her knees, "thou hast torn away our priest and brother and left us all desolate, yet in thy great mercy extend to him thy loving arm and cheer him with thy presence in his lonely dungeon. Oh, suffering Jesus! oh, sorrowful Mary! may your sacred and united hearts fling holy beams of heavenly light around his hard pillow, and may thrilling strains of celestial music echo from his prison walls. Oh, blessed Saviour! remember the bitter chalice pressed to thy own sacred lips, and for the sake of thy own all-sufficient merits touch the hearts of his keepers that they may pity his poor body, and not permit it to freeze or suffer on the stone floor of his dungeon. Oh, holy Queen of Angels! pray for the outcast priest of God."

Clasping the weeping child in her arms, Agnes murmured, "I will protect you, poor Ursula, and perhaps God may hear our prayers for your uncle's deliverance; but you must pray for our enemies, and pity them, and never hate them."

At this moment Cecily slowly entered the library with the mantle and hood which she had

discovered at the foot of the stairway. Her dusky features wore their ordinary calm and stoical expression, and no one would have read in her countenance any consciousness of the startling occurrences which had just passed before her eyes. Mary Sidney looked in amazement at the tranquil face of her servant, for she knew full well that the Indian girl's devotedness to herself was exceeded by her love for Father Ury, and she expected some demonstration of the agony burning in her faithful heart, but none came.

"Where have you been, Cecily?" she inquired, instantly.

"Cecily been to the prison."

"And what good could you do there for Father Ury, Cecily?"

"Cecily found Father Ury's room."

Harry Clarke's ear caught her last words in the adjoining room, and he exclaimed, quickly, "That's very fortunate, Cecily. Can you show me where it is from the house when daylight comes?"

"Come," she said, leading the way to the door through which the party had dragged the priest, and which faced the prison across the common.

Pointing toward the northern corner of the building, whose outlines began to be visible in the early dawn, she said, emphatically, "There Father Ury is."

"What," exclaimed Harry, "close down by the ground where that light is?"

"Yes," replied the girl.

He looked attentively toward the faint light, which seemed to issue from the ground under the building; and then turning to Mary, who had followed, he said, "I am quite sure that is the vile dungeon where murderers are placed; but I thought it was used only in warm weather."

"They cannot intend to murder him there," she replied, with horror; "for certainly he will freeze to death if they keep him in that place two nights like this."

"I can't tell," said Harry, bitterly, "what refinement of cruelty these wretched fanatics are capable of, but this first move indicates some fearful conclusion for poor Father Ury."

"But," said Mary, terrified at his now despairing tones, "you said a few moments ago that we might possibly effect his escape."

"But I never dreamed human beings would confine a man in such a hole as that at this season of the year, and then the only window in it is no larger than my hand. But," he added, more cheerfully, "we will not yield to despair yet, before we have made a single attempt to rescue him. Come in, now, or you will freeze yourself, Mary."

Already objects were coming out distinctly in the light of approaching day, and Mary prepared for her homeward walk as speedily as possible, that she might not be observed by the early-rising inhabitants of the city. Harry accompanied her and Cecily to Colonel Sidney's house, and at parting said, "We shall now be deprived of the holy sacrifice, dear Mary, and many of the blessed consolations of the Church; but the gentle Mother whose name you have taken in baptism will watch over you, and we never can be deprived of the communion of saints."

"That is a precious thought, Harry, and I shall soon ask them to visit poor Father Ury. But shall I inform father of my baptism and of this whole affair immediately?"

"I would, by all means," he replied; "for he

will never forgive you for concealing anything from him now, since he has proved so kind and lenient to us all; and then, too, his influence may procure a cell for Father Ury more suitable for a human being. God bless you both," he said, turning to leave, "don't fail to inform me of everything you learn concerning the priest. Good-bye."

When the Colonel appeared from his room, Mary acquainted him with all the circumstances of the arrest and that she had received baptism at the hands of the supposed servant. When she described the brutal manner with which Father Ury was dragged away and thrust into an underground dungeon, her father could not contain his fury."

"Good heavens! such outrages perpetrated in the name of religion, and by men professing to allow liberty of conscience! Mary, I know the necessity and propriety of obeying the laws as well as any man, but if I had witnessed that poor priest torn away from the very altar where he was peaceably worshipping God, my old soldier arm would have sent some of the ruffians reeling, if they hung me up the next instant.

What business have these Protestants to preach up persecution? No matter if papist princes did persecute, it does'nt justify these scoundrels who proclaim freedom of religious opinion and worship. I must go down to the prison, Mary," he exclaimed, "for I may be able to help this poor man. Cecily, hand me my cloak."

In a few seconds the old soldier was on his way at double quick tread, for the keenness of the atmosphere suggested to his mind the necessity of rescuing the priest from the cold dungeon immediately. As he approached the common, he discovered a crowd collected around the jail, which increased continually by new arrivals as the intelligence of the wonderful arrest flew along the streets of the city. Little knots of listeners were grouped about several persons who had been engaged in the capture, and with curiosity drank in every syllable of their wonderful narration. The Colonel was making directly for the entrance of the prison, when he was accosted by a pious-looking individual, whom he recognized as the saint of the English Presbyterians.

"Good-morning, Colonel Sidney; the Lord

has been doing a great work in this city: last night the hiding-place of the beast was broken open, the idols thrown down, and he that made Israel to sin carried away captive."

"Get out of my way, you snivelling hypocrite," growled the old veteran; "you're a model saint to rejoice over the miseries of a brave man; why don't you show your piety by furnishing something to make him comfortable?"

"God forbid that I should approach the unclean thing," replied the astonished parson; but the Colonel had brushed by him, and was speaking with one of the officers of the prison.

After a brief parley the heavy door swung back on its hinges, and he followed the man into the main hall of the building. Passing to the other extremity of the hall, the two descended a narrow flight of stairs, at the foot of which they encountered a man who was walking rapidly up and down before three or four heavy oak doors, apparently to keep himself warm. He was armed with a blunderbuss, and paused as he saw the two descending the stairs.

"Colonel Sidney wants to see the priest,

John; do you think the overseer would let him?" inquired the guide.

The man whom the Colonel recognized as one of his old soldiers, said, quickly, "Ah! my dear Colonel, I'm glad to see you, and I'd be happy to serve you, but I ha'int forgot the old discipline yet—to obey orders. You see, the overseer left 'special orders to let nobody communicate with this prisoner; but I've no doubt if you wait in his room awhile till he comes, he'd let you see him."

"Will he be gone long?" inquired Colonel Sidney."

"No, sir," replied the man, "not over a half hour."

"Well, I'll wait for him then," said the Colonel; and retracing their steps, the guide ushered him into a comfortable room near the main entrance of the prison, where he found a large fire blazing in the fireplace. Leaving the Colonel alone before the cheerful blaze, the officer departed to his duties..

CHAPTER IX.

For several minutes Colonel Sidney sat motionless before the fire, expecting each instant to hear the footsteps of the overseer of the prison. Growing weary at length of listening for him, he sank back into his chair, and fixing his eyes on the cheerful blaze resigned himself to deep meditation on the singular situation in which he found himself. Almost the only Protestant in a city of twelve thousand souls who felt any sympathy for the desolate priest, he alone had braved the indignation of the citizens and the anathemas of influential pulpits to relieve the sufferings of a poor man never noticed by him before save as the coachman of Harry Clarke. Now the veil had been removed, and the servant was known to the world as one of that learned, fearless, and self-sacrificing priesthood which the infuriated malice of empires had failed to suppress. Their claim to be a legally

constituted and apostolic hierarchy the revolted clergy of the Establishment did not even presume to question, for they could not endure that almost contemptuous smile with which the priesthood of the old faith pointed toward their brutal and licentious founder and head who taught them purity and reformation. They felt constrained to follow the finger of that ancient hierarchy as it boldly and triumphantly directed their eyes along the crumbling ruins of human institutions and through the fluctuating scenes of mighty ages, and to assent to their inalienable title to bear the emblazoned banner of the cross. They trembled at the battle-shout the old Church had ever flung to heaven as it hurled its swelling legions of Christian soldiers against the banded powers of error and the treacherous ambush of the soul, private opinion, that shout which nerves the gentle virgin and guides the giant intellect: "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world; he that despiseth you, despiseth me."

Not utterly in vain had the gentle hand of the young convert turned over the mouldering volumes of the old Colonel's library, and point-

ing him to the noblest names of his cherished ancestry, asked him to designate their faith. Who had wrested the Great Charter of liberties from King John, and advocated principles of manly freedom for Englishmen? Who, centuries behind these times, had nourished the precious growth of representative government and laid the foundations for ameliorating the race? The old man was forced to admit they were devoted Catholics. Aye! men who knelt as children to receive the Blessed Sacrament, and rose from their knees to battle for free principles. Did they feel degraded or less able to encounter death for temporal rights because they firmly believed the promises of the Divine Teacher to his established Church must ever make it a universal spiritual beacon to the world. The veteran soldier had but one reply, and wondered that partial histories and pulpit prejudices had indeed woven for him a veil excluding the view of truth, and so artfully combined as to appear the conclusion of his own private opinion, when it was, n fact, the fabrication of narrow-minded zealots or interested teachers.

At the solicitation of his child to state the

doctrines of the old Church clearly, he had made signal failures in his efforts, and he was mortified to think how unfair his action had been to embrace the separated branch without investigating for himself if the principle of life and unity were not solely existent in the mighty tree. The preachers had informed him that the old Babylon would not suffer its children to be enlightened and learned, fearing the effect of light would be to destroy her hold upon them; and yet no sooner had his own daughter been deluded by this monster Church, than a new and singular eagerness had seized upon her to pore over books and travel in every direction of research. Even when she rose from the perusal of his own Articles of Faith, or from the study of the Holy Scriptures, he had looked in vain for the evidence of those distressing doubts in her countenance, or in any other manner, which the preachers assured him would arise, and the poor victim be obliged to hurry away and confess as mortal sins against God. And then, too, he could not suppress his own doubt if it was not more natural and plausible that the overwhelming majority of the old Christian Church

in their unity of faith might be right, and the small disunited minority of schismatics be wrong. And, moreover, the word Catholic in his Creed began to have a meaning in it; and even adopting the rule of the Dissenters, that the body of orthodox believers constituted an invisible universal Church, he was constrained to admit their claim to Catholicity had not the thousandth part of a tittle beside that omnipresent Church which was confirmed to be one kingdom or covenant, but was world-wide, and alone of all others able to retain and force from its enemies the name of Catholic. How singular to him appeared the existence of this wonderful Church, and the impossibility of pointing to the day or year when its doctrines were changed from the purity of early Christianity! It seemed as if so important a matter as a change of doctrine in the early Christian Church would have occasioned opposition from the pure Christians; history would chronicle it as it did the schisms and the heresies of the Arians, and the many others which were separated from the Catholic Church.

The candid old soldier was constrained to acknowledge, that when he charged the old faith

with becoming corrupt, and varying from the tenets of the primitive Christians, he was dealing in assertions which he could not prove from history. When he maintained, against Mary, that the Scriptures did not teach many doctrines of the Catholic Church, and, consequently, it must have changed the original faith, she always advanced the great difficulties of each person interpreting the Bible for himself, and discovering what was the original faith. She objected to his observance of the first day of the week, if he insisted upon the Scriptures being a sufficient guide, and he had admitted they alone did not authorize him to reject the Jewish Sabbath.

Such reflections troubled Colonel Sidney as he looked intently in the fire, and with them came others of the heroic prisoner, who had lived in the capacity of a menial, that he might extend to the suffering and outcast Catholics the consolations of his priestly office and religion. He was at length interrupted by the entrance of the superintendent of the jail, who instantly conceded the favor of visiting the priest, for the Colonel's position in the Assembly, and his influ-

ence as a citizen, gave him access where many would have in vain solicited such privileges.

"Is it possible you know this Jesuit, Colonel Sidney?" inquired the overseer.

"I have known him only as Clarke's servant till an hour ago; but I understand he is placed in a bitter cold dungeon, and I came to relieve him, if possible."

"I declare, Colonel," exclaimed the officer, in amazement, "I believe you would get a blanket for the devil himself, if you found him freezing."

"Very likely I would," replied the old man, as he descended the narrow stairway the second time.

The overseer admitted him at once into the cell of the doomed man; but for a moment the eye of the Colonel could not distinguish objects at all, so faint was the light admitted through the narrow loophole in the top of the opposite wall of the dungeon.

"Come forward into these rays of light, John, so that I can see you. I am Colonel Sidney, whom you have frequently seen at your master' house."

"I am chained to the wall, sir," replied a

voice which he recognized as that of the servant, "but I thank you, Colonel Sidney, for your kindness in visiting the popish priest. It must be a very tender heart which can dictate anything but harsh words to me."

The mild address of the unseen prisoner, and the deep pathos in his tone, sent an intense thrill of sympathy through the warm heat of Colonel Sidney, and he said to the overseer, quickly, "Can you not procure me a lantern, or something of that kind, for a few moments? I must see the owner of that voice."

"Certainly, sir," replied the officer; and calling to the guard outside, he despatched him for a light.

In a few moments the guard returned with one of the prison lanterns, and its strong glare revealed distinctly every object in the cell. The next instant the Colonel started back in amazement at the noble figure sitting before him, chained to the wall, against which he was leaning, by his extended arms. The priestly vestments in which he was arrested had not been removed, but remained upon him precisely as when he had been interrupted in the Mass.

How fearfully appropriate was the symbolic dress of the Catholic priest to his present situation! About his neck was the bandage with which his Saviour's eyes were blindfolded by his tormentors; his white garment indicated that with which Herod clothed him and sent him away to Pilate, and the chasuble above this denoted the purple robe in which he was mocked as king, while the broad cross woven in the back of it was emblematic of the heavy load he bore upon his shoulders on his way to Calvary; the maniple upon his wrist and the stole about his neck were symbols of the cords with which his sacred body was bound. For seeking earnestly to follow in his Master's footsteps, he, too, was mocked and bound, and now he needed only one successful attempt to return to duty, that he might be doomed to imitate the last great act of the divine drama in suffering an ignominious death.

"I have never seen this man," exclaimed Colonel Sidney; "this is not Clarke's servant."

"Yes, sir," replied the overseer, "this is the identical person who drove Mr. Clarke's coach; you forget, Colonel, that he was completely dis-

guised. I could not myself realize it for awhile, but there is no doubt about it, sir."

The Colonel looked at Father Ury for an instant, and detecting an expression of anguish on his countenance, inquired, compassionately, if he were not suffering from the cold.

"I am nearly frozen, sir, sitting upon this stone floor," he replied, in a faint voice. "I have already been here several hours. Thank God! it will soon be over.

It was too true, for chained down as he was he could not move to keep the blood in circulation, and the frozen air had been slowly doing its work. Tearing off his cloak instantly, Colonel Sidney wrapped it about the prisoner, and drew his heavy fur cap over the bare head of the freezing man, demanding at the same time of the overseer, by whose direction the priest had been placed in that hole to die.

"The warrant, sir, was procured on the information of the Rev. Mr. Billman, and he seemed to have the general direction of the whole affair, for he advised the officer who made the arrest to insist upon my shutting up the priest in one of the dungeons. I told them, Colonel, that

the man would freeze, but it was no use; and you know the reverend gentleman has influence enough to remove me from my place."

"I believe hell supplies the pulpit in this Province," muttered the fearless old soldier. After a moment's reflection, he asked, "Can anything more be required of you, Smith, than to keep the prisoner in as safe a place as this dungeon?"

"Certainly not, Colonel," replied the overseer.

"Well, then, you put this priest in a comfortable cell above, and I will pay for as much extra assistance as you think will make his escape impossible. I will see that you are justified in this business by an application to the authorities; but carry this man to a fire immediately."

"I am satisfied, Colonel, with this arrangement," replied the officer; and summoning the guard outside, they unbound Father Ury and assisted him up the stairway as rapidly as his benumbed limbs would allow.

He was soon sitting before a blazing fire, and the chill hand of the destroyer was stayed. While the cell was preparing which Colonel Sidney had examined to assure himself of its suit-

ableness for a human being, he had a fine opportunity of scanning the appearance of the nobly-formed prisoner who had so powerfully enlisted his sympathy. The association of his mind with regard to the individual before him had been that of the ordinary inferior qualities of drivers and persons of that class in life. How great, then, was his amazement to discover that the disguise of the servant had concealed from the world a man with the intellectual developments of genius, and possessed of that conversational mildness and ease which invariably denote familiarity with intelligent and cultivated society.

The anomaly of a member of the legislative body approaching a Catholic priest with the accents of kindness upon his tongue, and the more substantial benefits of practical intentions at his heart, fell upon the sensitive soul of Father Ury with the soothing influence of a cherished friend's voice. His desolate heart threw out its first tendrils of regard toward this Protestant stranger, and acknowledged his advent as a merciful sunbeam from his Maker to alleviate the horrors of the gloomy night before him. The heavenly zeal and the indomitable

resolution of the outcast priest gushed forth in his words with the convincing power of sincerity, and evidenced the existence of a God-given strength of character to brave death itself for truth and a martyr's crown.

Unfortunately for Colonel Sidney, there was no clear-sighted divine of Protestantism at his elbow to caution him against this fascination of manner and affected candor of soul, and inform him with the gravity of a sage that the Catholic Church was a finished system of deception, and this attractive form of speech the art by which she won impulsive and inexperienced natures into her communion. But then a serious question might have arisen if such suggestions of his spiritual adviser would have withdrawn him without the mysterious circle of such influences, for the incessant efforts of evangelical heralds had failed as yet to make the veteran Colonel either a dupe or fool of their startling conjectures and marvellous statements licked into a misshapen image and denominated perfect wisdom and saintly discrimination. However this might have been, he certainly appeared to listen and converse with the poor priest as one who

believes the persuasion of the truth of a creed may make a man at once interesting and influential; and when the victim of private interpretation-preachers was consigned to his narrow cell, he took leave of him with far different emotions than when he sought the prison on an errand of mercy to a poor, ignorant, and deluded man. The Colonel felt conscious, as he encountered the scowling glances of several persons outside the jail, that he had bearded the lion of public opinion with a vengeance; but the corner of his cloak which dangled over his shoulder fluttered in the wind behind his rapid march like a banner of defiance to the intolerant Province.

When he had informed his daughter of his success, the deep gratitude and happiness of the young convert compensated fully for all apprehensions he might have entertained regarding the future reproaches of his friends or the anathemas of the parsons. "Why, Mary," he said, "your priest is a very attractive man, and I am not surprised his instructions should have induced you to embrace his faith."

"But, father," she replied, "my acquaintance

with Father Ury was subsequent to my conviction of the claims of the Church, and it was only when I went to the house to prepare myself for baptism, that I learned who was the real priest."

"Do you know his age, Mary?" he said, pparently unconscious of her reply.

"He is nearly forty," she replied, "and has been a priest about ten years, so Agnes tells me. He was an artist and architect originally, and in the study of these favorite arts was necessarily involved in the history of the Catholic Church. Its unaccountable preservation and ever-increasing sway against the fiercest opposition of sects, pagans, and infidels aroused his curiosity, and he determined to fathom its great secret of success. He was convinced, at length, that nothing but a divine institution could survive such assaults, and from being a bitter skeptic he became a devoted priest. He was, I believe, educated a Calvinist; but the thousand sects which sprang from Luther, and commenced assailing each other, convinced him that the principle of unity in doctrine was impossible upon the rule of private interpretation of Scripture. With a natural tendency of mind to a religious life, he

pored over the Bible to discover which sect was right, for they all based their discordant doctrines upon the teachings of the book; but finding so many texts to support all of them, and no rule to determine the figurative from the literal sense, he abandoned the book as a guide for ever."

"But why did he not embrace the Protestant Episcopal Church," interposed the Colonel, "where he would find harmony of doctrine and the succession from the Apostles?"

"Because," replied Mary, "when he examined their creed, he found one of the distinguishing marks of the true Church to be Catholicity; and when he saw this, he could only laugh at little England calling herself Catholic; and, moreover, she seemed absurd to him to cast off the authority of the old and the Universal Church which had always claimed to be divine and infallible, and then set up herself as authority after acknowledging that she might teach error and become corrupt."

The Colonel would not admit the various Protestant sects into his Church to make out a small claim to Catholicity, for he was a firm

Churchman; and even with them all, he knew too well the immense and world-wide Catholic Church could smile at their claim. A thought occurred to him that some of his clergy, when driven to prove their Catholicity, attempted to draw in the members of the Roman Catholic Church, and out of the combination make a Catholic Church; but he disliked to pilfer members from that Church which taught, and its children believed, damnable error, and crowd them among the wrangling sects out of which the attempt was to be made to constitute a universal Church. So he concluded it was better not to examine the question of Catholicity further, but be contented with reading from his Creed, "I believe the Holy Catholic Church," and think how beautifully it sounded, and how consoling it would be if the Protestant Episcopal Church had only the extension of that old Babylon, that giant Christian Church, whose hand only could contain all the orthodox.

CHAPTER X.

The arrest of Father Ury had fallen upon the Clarke family like a thunderbolt. They had fancied their great secret almost impenetrable; and undoubtedly it would have remained so, had not domestic treachery, against which no precaution could have been taken, suddenly thwarted their benevolent scheme of furnishing the persecuted Catholics of the city with the spiritual aid of a priest. The traitor was soon discovered, for on the morning of the arrest the female servant of the family was missing, and never again returned. The tempting bribe held out by the city authorities had proved too large for the fidelity of the poor girl, and she promised to admit the police into the house through her apartment on the lower floor while Father Ury was engaged in the Mass, so that they might be convinced of the servant being a true priest by detecting him in the very performance of the proscribed worship.

Thus the family was deprived of both servants the same day, and the task of procuring others who were Catholics was one of extreme difficulty. Harry would not employ Protestants till every possible hope of securing Catholic domestics should be removed; for if the Catholics of the city met in any devotion, such enemies would not hesitate to betray them. In the midst of his inquiries a vessel arrived from England with several persons on board professing the Catholic faith, and he soon discovered among this number a man and his wife who eagerly accepted his offer of employment. But this unexpected blessing came not alone, for the faithful couple, after cautiously obtaining his solemn promise of secresy, informed him that a priest had arrived in the vessel with them in the disguise of a tradesman, and promised to inform his fellow-voyagers of his home when he should have located himself, so that they might know where to attend Mass. This was intelligence to the deserted Catholics of the city, appreciable only by one who has known the thrilling joy of approaching the sacraments of the Church with contrition of heart and a sincere desire to be

reconciled with an insulted God. The holy sacrifice was not, then, to be denied them, and the young convert might hope to commune with the Eternal many days before the ruffian crowd should find and desecrate their new altar.

Father Raymond, the priest who had arrived in the Province so opportunely, found little difficulty in the selection of a store suited to his purpose. He soon informed the servants of Harry Clarke that he was prepared to say Mass in his new home, and requested them to acquaint the Catholics in the city, with whom they might come in contact, with his presence, and enjoin them to observe extreme caution and silence. What was his surprise to learn from the coachman that the family of his employer were also Catholics, and had concealed the unfortunate Father Ury, of whose capture he had heard immediately upon his landing! An acquaintance was soon formed with the Clarkes and Mary Sidney, and plans contrived for enabling Father Ury to participate in the sacraments of the Church. Every scheme, however, which had suggested itself seemed so replete with extreme hazards, that they would not attempt the execu-

tion of it, lest a discovery should render more difficult their great future design of effecting his escape.

Mary Sidney informed them that her father visited the prisoner several times during the week, having become deeply interested in him; and she had learned from him that the priest was confined on the second floor of the jail, and during the night a guard was locked inside the cell with him. She had solicited her father that she might attend him on his visits to the prison; but he assured her that the orders were peremptory, to admit no papist into Father Ury's cell: and the recent apostacy of his daughter had already created suspicions and objections against himself, for it was *prima facie* evidence in the Province of an inclination toward popery, that a father did not drive his papist child from his doors. Thus every avenue of communication with the prisoner seemed hopelessly closed, and the only resource for his friends was before the altar of a merciful and omnipotent Providence.

Week after week rolled away, and the solitary priest paced the floor of his cell as far as the chain would allow him, and employed his time in

those meditations which his ecclesiastical education had persuaded him were preservative of the soul's purity. Sometimes he stood a few feet from the window, and looked forth over the common in the hope of catching a glimpse of those dear forms who had been to him as brother and sister since he had entered the Province to serve the little fold of the faithful. His eye frequently met their distant figures as they moved from their dwelling on errands of mercy, and his quivering lip breathed blessings after them, and prayers that faith would increase brighter in their hearts since the storm-clouds of persecution lowered, and the tinkling of the Mass-bell summoned them no more into the adorable presence of the Immaculate Lamb who was the bread which came down from heaven. He knew that each fatigue the heavy chain occasioned him, and each insult his bigoted visitors heaped upon him, was another offering acceptable to his Eternal Master, and would the sooner open to him the gates of the celestial city.

Among the clergymen of the various sects who intruded themselves upon him, the least repulsive was the Reverend James Farley, chap

lain at Fort George. He was a man of small stature, but universally intelligent and interesting in conversation, and at once firmly resolved to effect Father Ury's conversion to the Established Church. He could gain admittance to the cell whenever he desired it, for the government favor was extended with a very partial hand to the clergy of the Establishment. About the decline of day the reverend gentlemen was left at the door of the prison, when the officer of that post immediately admitted him; and traversing the main hall of the building he ascended the stairway at the right to the door of the cell.

The guard who watched in Father Ury's cell during the night was relieved during the day by another, who paced up and down the corridor outside, with a blunderbuss, having strict orders to shoot the priest if by any means he should free himself from the heavy fetters and attempt an escape, of which there seemed no human probability. The man was also prohibited from admitting any one to the cell, excepting only the chaplain, without the direct assent of the overseer.

The Reverend James Farley, taking advan-

tage of his free access to the prison, determined to astonish the parsons of the dissenting congregations by the anomalous feat of converting a popish priest to the tenets of the Church of England. He had none of that fierceness in denouncing the errors of Rome which characterized the immaculate leaders of the Presbyterian sect, but calmly and dispassionately he argued the perpetual continuance of the Episcopalian organization from the time of the Apostles, and that the kings and queens of England had always been the head of the Church, and would so continue to be to the end of time. However, the cogency of his reasoning had as yet been unappreciated by Father Ury, who was inclined to estimate all the sects alike, whose systems professed to be based upon private interpretation of Scripture. To this principle of Protestantism had the priest clung in every argument, maintaining that all authority, human and divine, might be annihilated or resisted if each man might be allowed to follow out the opinions gleaned from the Scriptures. In vain were the powers of the chaplain exerted to draw Father Ury from this foundation principle to

argue on some other basis. "No," he would say, "I must at the last great day assign to my God the same reason for my faith as the humblest pauper in creation. I must say to the Eternal Judge, 'Oh, my Maker, I was a poor weak child amid a war of sects and opinions all derived from the Scriptures, all quoting rival passages to sustain their rival doctrines.' Some even pointed to the same verse to sustain their opposite doctrines; one said it should be taken literally, and another that it was figurative; one pointed me to passages proving the Divinity of Christ—another to verses proving the contrary; some texts declared that we are justified by faith alone; and others that we are not justified by faith alone; and yet, oh, my God! these sects each said to me, 'Our Church may become corrupt and teach you error—it is not an infallible teacher; this Book, which is the basis of all sects, is an infallible teacher alone.' There was one Church, oh, my God! which said to me, 'Come to us—we cannot teach you anything but truth, for Christ established a Church which was to be an infallible guide to the consummation of the world.' I turned to look at this Church

which claimed infallibility for itself, and I found its arms reaching to every country on the globe, and, moreover, all the other Churches had their root in this old Church claiming so much for itself. This vast and omnipresent Church said to me, and to all the world, 'You must become as a little child, to enter into the kingdom of God;' but the small churches said, 'No! do not become as a little child, but exercise your own judgment upon this book about which we all quarrel so—you cannot have a better guide than your opinion.' 'Oh, yes,' chimed in the infidel; 'these sects have the right idea of this book when they tell you to exercise private opinion in reading it; be careful, however, in exercising this judgment, that what your good father and mother, or your excellent friend concluded about the book do not influence your opinion of it; for this would be following authority, and not exercising your glorious freedom of opinion.' Then I said to myself, that a merciful Creator would make the way of salvation simple and plain for all his creatures, and not give them a book as the sole guide about the proper meaning of which so many wise men could differ and

yet be sincere; so I trusted my spiritual interests to that immense Church which claimed the sole authority of explaining it, and maintained that it was utterly inexplicable without the traditions which this Church had handed down along with it. If I have erred, it has been because I obeyed thy command to 'hear the Church;' and I have heard the only Church which asked or commanded me to hear it, the only Church which denied that my private reading of Scripture was as good and infallible an authority as its voice. I chose faith rather than opinion, a Church to guide me rather than my erring judgment, unity rather than discord of doctrine, and child-like trust rather than pride of intellect. I preferred that which claimed incorruptibility to that which dared not deny its weakness and liability to err."

The chaplain never despaired of at length enticing this obstinate priest from his citadel of the rule of faith, but continued his visits with commendable zeal and perseverance. He would not join the cry of persecution until every shaft should be exhausted from his intellectual quiver, and every hope of astonishing the dissenting parsons should have faded away.

One evening in February, Father Ury was sitting as near the window as his chain would allow him to place his stool, looking out upon the driving flakes of snow which were bringing on a premature night. Occasionally his eye caught a glimpse of indistinct figures ploughing their way through the deep snow upon the common; but these pedestrians were few and far between, for the jail was situated quite remotely from the principal part of the city. As he sat thus lonely and thoughtful, he heard the sound of footsteps ascending the stairs, and then they paused before his door, while the voice of the guard exclaimed, "Well, Mr. Farley, you must have a queer heart to come out in such a storm as this to see a popish priest."

The next instant the heavy key turned in the door, and the short figure of the Reverend James Farley entered once more. The desolate priest was happy to have his solitude interrupted even by the persevering logician, for he had seen no person in his room for two or three days except his keepers. Father Ury could not avoid a smile at the pertinacity with which the man wore his gown upon all his visits, as if to impress

upon the mind of the prisoner a more exalted opinion of the apostolic functions of the man who was endeavoring to effect his conversion. Upon this occasion the gown was partially concealed by the capacious cloak with which the successor of the Apostles had enveloped himself, and which was covered with a coating of snow flakes. Nevertheless the silken rustle of his train evidenced at once his clerical character, and Father Ury expected his narrow cell would once more become the arena of a theological dispute. What was his surprise when the hat had been removed and the heavy muffler unbound from the throat and mouth of the clergyman, to discover that the person before him was a perfect stranger. Before he could exclaim, the stranger made an impressive motion of silence, and handing Father Ury a letter which he drew from beneath his vestment, said, quickly, but in a guarded tone, "It's from Mr. Clarke, your friend. I feared it would be too dark for you to read it, so I brought a dark lantern under my gown."

While speaking, he drew out a small object which he held close to Father Ury and opening

a small door in it cautiously, suffered the rays of light to fall upon the priest's hand. Accustomed to surprises and concealments, the prisoner without a word unfolded the letter and read in Harry Clarke's handwriting:

"The bearer is a true man. We all pray for you. God bless you. HENRY L."

Turning to the stranger, Father Ury said, in a low voice, "I have never seen you before—are you a Catholic?"

"Yes," replied the gowned messenger, "and a priest also, who have barely escaped with my life from England. If you wish to confess, do it instantly before we are interrupted, and we will converse afterward."

"Have you the Blessed Sacrament with you?" inquired Father Ury, as he knelt beside the stool which the strange priest immediately occupied.

"Yes, and without any desecration, thank God!" he replied; and Father Ury went on with his confession. In a few moments the absolution was pronounced and the Blessed Sacrament received.

"Now, Father Ury," he said, "will you hear

my confession? God only knows when I shall have another opportunity."

"Certainly," replied the prisoner; "give me your stole;" and resuming his seat he performed the reciprocal office of the Catholic priest, and then folding the stole returned it to the owner.

"Do not leave your muffler loose from your face," said Father Ury, "for if the keeper should enter suddenly, he might discover your features. How completely deceived I was in your appearance! Your voice is exactly that of the Episcopal clergyman. But did no one speak to you at the main entrance?"

"Oh, yes," replied the disguised priest; "the man immediately recognized my short figure and this clumsy gown as belonging to his reverence James Farley, and admitted me readily. We passed some words upon the storm, and he advised me to warm myself in the overseer's room and brush off the snow. But I assured him my time was precious, and hurried away up stairs. The guard outside your door could not have discovered me, I believe, if I had been without my muffler even, for the corridor was quite dark."

"But how did you happen to discover the

similarity of your voices?" inquired Father Ury.

"It was all the work of that Indian girl, Cecily. She has been observing of every trifle which has occurred since you were arrested, so Clarke says, and formed the whole plan entirely by herself. One morning after Mass she disclosed the whole plot, directing our attention to the resemblance of Farley's upper face and his height to mine, and advising us to procure a gown, and let her exhibit to us the disguise. She would not suffer her mistress to know anything of the affair until she had arranged my dress in order to test the likeness. So I entered the door of Clarke's house while Miss Sidney was there, and she immediately accosted me as Mr. Farley; and neither my voice nor my appearance betrayed me, for she seemed wonderfully amazed at my presence. There could be no further doubt of the propriety of the attempt, and we waited only for a stormy evening. Cecily had watched the visits of Farley, and calculated the days there would probably be no chance of meeting him here, and even advised Clarke to paint his carriage for the occasion. The attempt

was hazardous; but if I can go out undiscovered, the whole thing is accomplished. Has any plan of escape occurred to you?"

"None," replied Father Ury, "except by wrenching those bars in the window, which I know I have strength to do if I could rid myself of this chain; but even then I must spring from the window in the daytime, for a man sits in this room all night, with a loaded blunderbuss. However, if the chain could be taken off, I would venture a spring upon him, and gag him before he could give an alarm."

Father Raymond surveyed the priest from head to foot, and then replied, "I have no doubt of your strength if your figure tells a true story, but the great risk would be in springing upon him without creating a great noise. I have two files here for you, which will cut the chain and the bars, too, if you conclude to make the attempt. I see the carriage coming for me," he added, as he looked out through the window, "and I must go immediately. God bless you, my dear brother, and the Blessed Virgin aid you. If you cannot escape, I will strive incessantly to see you again, and bring you the Blessed Sacra-

ment. If we do not meet in this world, we shall meet in heaven. God bless you—pray for me."

They gave one long embrace, and the poor prisoner could only articulate, "Tell them, I pray for them all. God bless you all, and keep you for himself. Good-bye."

Father Raymond knocked upon the door, and the guard speedily let him out; but the next instant Father Ury heard the man say, "You did'nt argue as loud as usual, Mr. Farley. I think you must be converting him." The voice of Father Raymond was heard replying, "If he does not agree with me now, he will by and by."

Father Ury listened to his receding footsteps, and after a few moments felt assured he had gone out without detection. He then concealed the files about his person, and sat down to meditate upon the unexpected hope which had looked into his prison.

CHAPTER XI.

Colonel Sidney and his daughter were sitting in the parlor of Harry Clarke's residence one evening in the latter part of March. This was almost the only dwelling in the city where the old soldier and his papist child were free from insult, and could pass an evening without danger of hearing odious allusions to the faith of Mary's adoption, or reproaches for having exhibited kindness and sympathy toward the popish priest. Mary had at length discovered that the few invitations which were extended to her, resulted from a morbid desire to make assaults upon her Church, and repeat to her the stale calumnies with which ignorant and designing clergymen were preparing their credulous people for their anticipated feast of bigotry, upon the quivering limbs of their imprisoned victim, the poor Catholic priest. She resolved to avoid these ssemblies, which never afforded her the least

gratification, and where she encountered frequently bitter taunts and assertions, which her fearless replies served to augment. Thus she found herself every week spending an evening with her friend Agnes and her bethrothed. Her father, discovering daily how much more congenial to his tastes was the society of the Clarkes, often accompanied her, though his war-spirit would not allow him to disconnect himself entirely from his Protestant friends, with whom he kept up incessant skirmishes regarding their uncharitable feelings and their diabolical intentions.

Before the little circle were aware of it, their conversation had been prolonged till after midnight, and Colonel Sidney starting from his seat, declared that he never could recollect himself or the flight of time when he called upon the Clarkes. As the two were preparing to leave the house, a distant sound fell upon their ears, which swelled louder and clearer each instant, and they all hurried to the door to ascertain its fearful import, for an instinct feeling of something frightful was occasioned by the wild shout. In a few seconds persons across the common had taken up the distant cry, and now the listeners

distinguished clearly the loud alarm of "Fire! fire!" as it flew away over the awakening city with fearful distinctness upon the heavy night air. Harry's quick eye detected a bright gleam of light upon the southern sky, and pointing toward it he exclaimed, "There it is, somewhere near the fort. How rapidly it increases! I am going down there, Colonel Sidney, for I may be able to assist them."

At this moment the quick strokes of the old English church bell came pealing away from the south, and the increasing din of many voices sent a thrill of intense excitement through the hearts of that group as they listened to that fearful cry, "Fire! fire!" and beheld the bright glare of the flames gushing up toward heaven, while volumes of smoke rolled away toward the eastward, as the breeze from the bay broke its dense clouds into a thousand fantastic waves. Harry grasping his hat from the table strode away down the streets, which now began to be illumined by the blazing buildings, and mingling with the crowd which rushed along in the direction of the fire, soon found himself approaching the extreme south end of the city. Hurrying

along a few rods farther, the scene of the fire burst upon his view, and with amazement he beheld all the buildings in Fort George enveloped in flames. The Lieutenant-Governor's house, the barracks, and the Episcopal chapel were girdled by immense masses of leaping blaze; and at the instant Harry arrived, the falling sparks discharged a heavily-loaded gun upon one of the bastions, and the sound boomed away over the water, adding to the increasing terror of the conflagration. The inmates of the fort had effected their escape from the burning buildings, and headed by the Rev. James Farley were making desperate exertions to rescue the chapel from the jaws of the furious element. The intrepid chaplain had mounted the roof, and with a half dozen soldiers was receiving buckets of water, and casting it upon the flames which wreathed themselves each instant closer about his feet, and contesting each inch of ground as reluctantly he gave way before the rapidly-increasing heat of the conqueror.

This was the spot for Harry; and flinging aside his coat, he forced his way through the crowd of spectators, and in a few seconds stood

by the side of the obstinate chaplain, and fought the fire with the ardor of desperation. Their efforts excited the cheers of the thousands who witnessed the gallant little band, but none dare ascend to the peak of the church nearest the Government House, where this handful of heroic men battled the flames, for their standing-place seemed to the crowd to sway beneath their feet, and each instant seemed their last. But no; the faintest hope at last died away of arresting the flames, and slowly they began to recede toward the tower of the church, and finally descended the ladder with the long tongues of flame lapping their forms and the heavy timbers falling about them. With their faces and hands severely burned and half-suffocated by the driving smoke and cinders, they staggered away from the church and were immediately conducted into the neighboring houses outside the fort.

The strong breeze from the bay was driving the fire furiously along the barracks and already they were half consumed, when a cry of horror ran along that vast multitude of spectators as a tottering figure appeared at a window in the

second story of the building waving one hand imploringly toward the crowd. It was an invalid soldier who had been forgotten in the panic, and had contrived to crawl to the window and hold on by one hand while he feebly motioned with the other. For the instant the deserted wretch was able to support himself by the window-sill the scene was most horrible. The spectators saw him through a sheet of flame driven before the window by the wild wind, and the next moment he had fallen backward from extreme weakness.

"Save him! save him!" shouted a thousand voices; but no one moved, for it would have been sheer madness to have approached within ten feet of the building; so intense was the heat even where the nearest persons stood, and the flames had already fastened upon every stairway. till each seemed formed of brilliant fire. Before the cry had died away, a tall and powerful-looking man broke his way through the crowd and cried out in a loud voice for handkerchiefs to bind over his mouth, and he would try to save the invalid. A dozen were handed him instantly, and before a minute had elapsed he had wound

them about his mouth and nostrils and was half way up the staircase which led to the invalid's room. A step broke beneath his weight, and he fell; but in an instant he placed his hand upon the banister and sprang from the flames up to the next higher one, and when the crowd supposed he was already dead, they saw his figure at the window of the invalid soldier dashing the sash to atoms and wrenching away the fragments of the wood. In one moment more he drew his tall figure partly from the opening he had made and sprang through the girdle of flame and smoke to the ground with the invalid, whom he lifted away from the building as he would a feather. He hurried away through the gate of the fort with his charge and placed him in one of the adjacent buildings, while cheer after cheer rolled away over those congregated thousands at the heroic deed; and when he issued again from the house, after depositing the invalid upon a bed, such a wild shout of applause was flung to heaven, that for an instant the roaring of the flames and the howling wind were unheard. But the bold stranger had been recognized as he hurried through the fort, and

before he could escape from the crowd which gathered about him to shake his hand, the loud voice of the Rev. John Billman exclaimed, "I knew I could not be mistaken in the man—it is the popish priest! Grapple him, men; don't you see he is trying to escape?"

Father Ury was slowly pressing his way through the crowd which had gathered about the door, but when the loud voice of the preacher mentioned the name of priest, several of his zealous people following the direction of his finger, rushed after the tall stranger and instantly laid hands upon him to arrest him. The brawny arm of the priest quickly shook off two of them, and he would have as easily freed the other arm and attempted an escape among the crowded streets had not some one tripped him up. Father Ury fell heavily, and was immediately overpowered by the great number who threw themselves upon him and held him down until cords could be procured to bind his wrists.

The cry of "Popish priest! popish priest!" echoed on all sides; and for thousands of the spectators the falling timbers and crackling flames had lost their attractive power, for a

glimpse of a real priest was not an every-day sight to the pious inhabitants of the Province.

As they bore him away toward the prison, cries resounded of "How did he escape?"—"It's a shame to hang him now, after saving that poor soldier!" With difficulty did the policemen who had taken charge of him force their way along the street, for the people crowded eagerly on every side to obtain a view of that wonderful and audacious being who had not only broken prison, and thus forfeited his life, but with consummate fearlessness made directly for the scene of the fire and rushed into the jaws of death to rescue a poor invalid soldier. The calm intrepidity and nobleness of the act could not be merged and forgotten even in the fierce tide of intolerant feelings, and many a voice of that bigoted multitude joined in the cheers which followed Father Ury even to the gate of the prison.

Colonel Sidney had remained in the door of Clarke's residence, unwilling to leave Agnes until her brother's return. The three could not ascertain what buildings were on fire, for every person who appeared in sight was too far dis-

tant to inquire, and they could only see that the conflagration was extending. The heavy booming of a cannon came solemnly and distinctly from the direction of Fort George, and the Colonel surmised at once that the sparks had occasioned an accidental discharge. In a few moments they heard a faint sound of many voices in the distance, and then another and another which Colonel Sidney was certain could be nothing else than united cheering of a great number of persons, for the fire appeared to be near the fort, which was a mile distant from Clarke's dwelling. They must have remained in the door for an hour anxiously listening to every sound, when they heard the shouts of many voices evidently approaching nearer each instant. At length they could distinguish several voices in loud altercation, which occasionally were drowned by the deafening cheers, and in a few moments the head of an immense crowd appeared coming along the street which led by the city prison. It was soon evident they had some person in custody, for they paused before the jail, and several voices loudly demanded admittance for a prisoner. Agnes caught the sounds

of "popish priest," and she instantly exclaimed, "They have discovered Father Raymond, I am confident. Please go over and see, Colonel Sidney, if it is not too true."

The suggestion at once sent the old man across the common, for he had supposed the captain was probably some incendiary connected with the present fire; but when Agnes mentioned the new priest, with whose secret presence Mary had already acquainted him, he felt an interest in the affair. As he approached the crowd, many voices cried out to the overseer to place the prisoner in one of the dungeons, but a hundred more declared threateningly that if the priest was not comfortably provided for they would tear down the prison walls about his head. What was Colonel Sidney's amazement to see the policemen conducting through the main entrance, not the person of the strange priest, but Father Ury himself! The officers of the jail were as astonished as himself to see the man brought to the main entrance whom they supposed securely confined in one of the cells; and when they had placed him in an upper cell under a strong guard, they proceeded to his former

apartment, which they found locked as usual. The heavy key was applied; and when the door swung back, their lanterns disclosed the figure of the guard bound firmly upon the bed of the priest, with his mouth completely gagged. They soon liberated him from his uncomfortable position, and learned from him that about two hours before he was reclining against the wall, and supposed Father Ury to be sleeping soundly, when in an instant the prisoner sprang across the room, and throwing him down with perfect ease, bound his mouth with a handkerchief before he could raise any alarm, and then bearing him to the bed bound his hands and feet so securely that he was unable to make any noise. In a few moments the window was raised and the iron bars wrenched away sufficiently for him to obtain egress, when he threw himself out and disappeared.

Upon examining the bars in the window, they were found to have been filed nearly through on the opposite side before they had been broken, and the heavy chain which had confined the priest to a limited circle was filed in two close at the ankle of the prisoner, and must have

been a long and tedious work, for it was a massive one, and the filing could only be carried on during the short day when the guard was not in the cell. Two small files were lying on the floor near the window, but how the priest had obtained them no one could conjecture. But the escape had proved fruitless for the unfortunate Father Ury, and had only served to pronounce his doom. He might pace the narrow circle which his fetters would allow him, and breathe the air which stole so softly through his window to whisper kind things in his loneliness, but in a brief space the April term of the solemn court would come, and then the executioner receive the bloody mandate to sever the silver thread of life and free the noble soul from time's cruel fetters.

There was a peculiar interest associated with this strange being in the minds of those who witnessed the thrilling scene at the conflagration, and learned the singular tale of his intercepted flight. He had won by desperate efforts the precious freedom of roving the beautiful world once more, but the wild cry of distress fell on his ear, and with the generous impulse of a noble

heart he flung aside the almost certain hope of life-long liberty to rescue human life. To save the invalid soldier he consented freely to embrace one of two deaths—the fire or rope, and the strange heroism crushed down the barrier of stern intolerance and drew enthusiastic plaudits even from ignoble bigots. As the keepers of that noble ecclesiastic admitted Colonel Sidney to his cell, they could echo the old soldier's exclamation of surprise at the placid features of the man. Calmly and cordially Father Ury extended his burnt hand to the veteran, and none could have dreamed the priest had a few moments before grappled with death by fire. "Colonel Sidney," he said, "I have measured my own span of life, and now I have only to prepare myself to die. You have proved the deep tenderness of your heart to me in my imprisonment, and I thank you with an earnestness which is my best and only recompense, and that earnestness is of my prayers. May God bless you! and, moreover, may that holy and immaculate Mother of Jesus, whom you refuse to honor even with as great degree of respect as you bestow upon the mother of England's king, ever

plead with her celestial Son to bring you to that faith which your poor child has so sincerely sought and found." He paused a moment, and then resumed: "I have a request to make of you which will seem to you to be almost a presumptuous one to address to a Protestant, but I have no other friend to ask. Will you not procure of Harry Clarke a crucifix for me, so that I may have one solace in my prison before I die? I assure you, sir, that no idolatrous feeling can enter my heart as I press the wounded feet of the symbol to my lips; it is only a picture of the poor Lamb which appeals to my heart, and nerves me for the death-struggle."

Colonel Sidney approached close to the side of Father Ury and whispered in his ear that no one outside might hear, "I will not only do this, but there is a concealed priest of your Church in this city whom I will strive with all my influence and perseverance to bring in contact with you before you die, if I can do so without compromising his safety. Mary intrusted me with the secret, hoping that my influence might bring you together at some time of your long imprisonment, but the poor child knows nothing yet of

this urgent necessity. Oh, my God! how can I tell them all of this frightful affair?"

"You will find them possessed of greater resources to assist in soothing the anguish of painful intelligence than you have any idea of, Colonel Sidney," replied the priest.

"But how can you, sir, be so composed while a cruel death is staring you in the face?—how can you meet unmoved such an ignominious fate as hanging?" inquired the Colonel, in amazement at the man's serene countenance and manner.

"Oh! Colonel Sidney," replied Father Ury, "this is no unexpected calamity to me. I knew full well when I left behind me the dear associations of my blue mountain home, that I was not to repose on beds of flowers, but should encounter peril and persecution in every form for my Master's sake. I knew the religions and sects of man's fabrication would hunt the priest of the divine Church and sacrifice his life, that they might triumphantly prove to Almighty God that the gates of hell had prevailed against the old faith; but I chose, aye, longed for a martyr's crown, and the Eternal King of heaven seems

almost to be ready to place the golden reward upon my head."

The heart of the brave Colonel whispered to him that this was a holy enthusiasm which he would give all his earthly hopes to possess; and when he emerged once more into the crowded street, he almost wished he were a Catholic. As he thoughtfully wended his way across the common, a heavy explosion was heard in the direction of Fort George, and the sky was filled with blazing timbers and myriads of sparks, which illuminated the streets of the city with the brilliancy of noon-day. The arsenal of the fort had blown up.

CHAPTER XII.

On the week following the destruction of the buildings in Fort George, another fire occurred in the immediate neighborhood, the origin of which no one could discover. Within the period of two weeks after this last fire, six distinct buildings were discovered to be in flames, and the people began to suspect that some of these fires occurring in such quick succession must have been the work of incendiaries. A proclamation was published offering a large reward for the detection of any one who might have been engaged in the affair; but no one came forward to claim the hundred pounds, and the suspicion of the fires being intentional began to subside. However, at the ensuing term of the Supreme Court, in April, the grand jury were directed by the court to make strict inquiries regarding these frequent fires in the city, and after a time they succeeded in eliciting sufficient testimony to authorize several

arrests of slaves and two or three white persons. Mary Burton, the servant of the infamous John Hughson, was allured by the dazzling reward proffered by the authorities to fabricate a story of a Negro Plot, which committed several poor slaves to prison for alleged attempt to burn the city and murder the white inhabitants. According to her statements, the slaves who resorted to her master's shop for drink were excited by John Hughson to an insurrection against their owners, and it was arranged among them that her master should be king of their new government, and one of the negroes named Cæsar be appointed governor.

So readily was her romantic tale credited, that several other persons were induced to become informers, in the hope of gaining the promised reward. In a brief period of time the jails were crowded with unfortuuate and innocent slaves, for the more incredulous the tale appeared the more easily was it believed. John Hughson was indicted, together with his wife and daughter, and the whole city presented a scene of intense excitement. For several weeks the Clarke family beheld from their windows continual assemblies

about the prison as some new unfortunate was received within its crowded walls; but for awhile they moved quietly on their paths of duty unmolested, for the singular frenzy of the city had as yet forgotten to involve the scattered few of the Catholic faith in this diabolical conspiracy. They had learned with delight that a petition to spare the life of Father Ury on account of his heroism at the burning of Fort George was gaining ground in the city, and they cherished the hope that a sufficient number of influential signatures might be procured to mitigate his punishment to banishment from the Province. The paper had been furiously opposed by the great mass of the citizens, but the persevering efforts of Colonel Sidney and a few of the prominent men were daily adding to the list, and there was a faint possibility of succeeding after several weeks.

But the strenuous exertion of these few opposers of public opinion was destined to be frustrated by the champion on the towers of the English Presbyterians, who was determined not to suffer this poor servant of the Catholic Church, which he so much feared and hated, to escape the talons of the Evangelicals without a desparate

struggle. With devilish ingenuity he discovered how the Negro Plot would answer his purpose, and the time had now arrived to strike his decisive blow, Mary Burton's evidence was the most convincing of all the informers, and he knew her accusation was never for an instant doubted. One Saturday evening, therefore, in the latter part of June, he disguised himself so completely that none could possibly detect his evangelical character, and stealthily sought the shop of Hughson, which was now under the sole charge of Mary Burton. Discovering that the door of the bar-room was nailed up, he approached a side door of the building and rapped gently upon it, for he was anxious to be entirely unnoticed by any chance passers-by. The knock, however, was heard within, and in a few seconds the brazen-faced servant of Hughson opened the door and demanded his business.

The cunning divine immediately drew several pieces of gold from beneath his coat, and extending them to the girl, said, in a low whisper, "Here is a present for you, my girl, which you shall have this minute if you will answer one question for me."

"Very well," replied the servant, eyeing the gold greedily; "if I can serve you, sir, I'll do it for that money."

"I only wish to know if that popish priest in the prison was not one of the ringleaders in this Negro Plot?" inquired the clergyman; "it occurred to me that he was just the man to be engaged in such an affair, and perhaps he had escaped your memory."

"Ah!" replied the girl, knowingly, "I understand now; you go 'long and keep your mouth shut, and I'll manage all that. A lucky thought that o' your'n," she added, extending her hand for the money.

He saw instantly his purpose was accomplished; and giving her the gold he turned away without another word, knowing he would receive an equivalent for it before long, for he was confident the suggestion would prove as valuable to her cause as his own.

After the clergyman was gone, and she had closed the door, a fiendish smile overspread her countenance, and she exclaimed between her teeth, "A lucky thought indeed! I have got three things by that bargain: I've got six pieces

of gold; I've got a way to make the plot stronger; and, what's better than all, I'll have revenge on that disguised priest for interfering with my business last winter. Why did'nt I think o' this priest long ago? Never mind—I'll fix him now!" So saying she ascended the stairs to conceal her money and arrange her accusation for the following week.

On the ensuing morning the Rev. John Billman ascended his pulpit with his usual sanctimonious and dignified expression, and composedly awaited the arrival of the remainder of his spiritual flock. He had intimated on the previous Sunday that he designed to advert to the Negro Plot in his next sermon, and suggest some of his own views regarding that still mysterious affair. Such frightful developments had appeared regarding the destruction of the city by fire, and so persevering and unflagging had been the labors of the grand jury in the indictment of conspirators, that the General Assembly of the Province, which had commenced its session in the month of April, had formally tendered their thanks to the grand jurymen, and urged them to renewed efforts and vigilance in the detection of

the offenders. When, therefore, it was announced that the pious and learned divine of the English Presbyterians was about to cast the effulgence of his immense wisdom upon the intricate mazes of this marvellous conspiracy, the Dutch and French Dissenters of the city flocked to hear him, and among the crowd were straggling Episcopalians, who had allowed their curiosity to draw them into a place of worship which they regarded as a species of religious theatre.

When at length the crowded assembly was reduced to silence and expectation, and the singers had acquitted themselves admirably of their usual flourish of nasal trumpets, the saintly minister proceeded to recite that stereotyped form of prayer which had become as formal as the written prayers of the Established Church, with which the Dissenters were so horrified. Upon this occasion the clergymen added to his supplication those little ornaments which he reserved for extraordinary gatherings; and when he resumed his seat, his parishioners gazed with admiration upon the placid countenance of the saint who could manufacture such beautiful and

appropriate prayers. In a few moments the people had indulged in another harmonious episode, and then the Rev. John Billman arose gravely and impressively from his seat, and lacing his notes on an immense Bible before im, slowly and distinctly announced his text as follows:

"The Spirit moves me to instruct you from the book of Numbers, in the chapter fourteen, and the verse marked twenty-seven.

"'How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which murmur against me.'"

There was a strange, wild pathos in the good man's voice, which thrilled arrow-like through every heart; and when the last word of the solemn reproach had died away, the people sat in death-like suspense till he should speak again. "I came to this people at the command of the Eternal King to teach them. For the guidance of the faithful did I abandon the soil of England and go down into the trough of the sea and toss upon the surging billows, and for seven long years I have toiled in this vineyard and lighted

the beacon of evangelical truth each Sabbath day for you. I have exhorted, admonished, and instructed you; I have moved high Heaven with solicitous supplications for you, and have flung myself between you and those specious errors which the arch fiend has fashioned for the unstable soul. Repeatedly have I lifted up my voice against every encroachment of formal religion, and I have striven to eradicate all desires or longings for anything like pomp or ceremony in the worship of the Eternal God. When some, wise in their own conceits, would attach the title of sacred to any building where the Christian services were performed, I remonstrated with them, and bade them remember that no church edifice was more sacred than a barn. Who will dare to charge me with having advocated anything besides the perfect simplicity of the primitive Church? You cannot yet have forgotten my caution to your children to avoid that Establishment of England, arrogating to itself the title of the Church of Christ, and yet being naught else than the stepping-stone to the old Babylon, the cursed Church of Rome. I have never ceased to cry from the watch-towers of

Zion, Come out of her, O my people, and be ye separate! The Church of England lies in wait for the lambs of the flock, and tells them that her forms of prayer are conducive to greater devotional feeling, when in truth they educate the tender heart in a morbid fondness for formalism, and thus prepare them for the last great apostacy to popery. This insidious influence of the Establishment you know too well. Need I say to you at this time, that Episcopacy is the nursery of the popish religion; when you have seen in your own city a fair young girl deluded from her father's dwelling to a popish mass-house, till her freedom of thought was wrested from her, and she became the tool of stealthy Jesuits? You know all this; you believe all this; you feel all this; and yet some of you have denied your Maker, and placed your signatures to the devil's instrument, and for what?—to free from death a viper who has been sucking away your heart's blood. Now have I reached the subject of my text: 'How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me?' Have you not murmured against your preacher, because, forsooth, he would not compromise with

the unclean beast which the Lord hath delivered into your hands? Aye! you have called the herald of the Cross cruel, because he warned you not to suffer the priest to live on the face of the earth, and many of you have signed away your souls to enable him to escape from the Province. The fiend had concocted a mighty scheme to deceive you, and preserved your child amid the flames of the fort that he might open your hearts to the tempter; and how triumphantly his burning finger now points to your dishonored names upon that petition! And yet you murmur against me for my zeal and my uncompromising spirit, and the enemy claps his hands in glee behind you, for he knows full well that if you spare his priests, his devilish work will soon be done. Forbear your murmuring for awhile, that the minister of God may prove to you that he seeks counsel from above, and has his eye steadily fixed upon the shallows and the quicksands in your present path. I do not reproach you all; for most of you, my people, have proved yourselves to be on the Lord's side. But yet many have fallen away; and these poor backsliders I would bring again to their

Father's house, and persuade their unfaithful and timid hearts that the voice of Jehovah calls them to make sacrifices for his service, and the first offering is that pride of life which directed heir trembling hands to write that fearful sin. There is still a kind Father's heart to receive the prodigal and make for him a feast of joy, if he will only destroy and uproot those evil propensities which influence him to press the hand of Babylon's priests and bid them welcome. Listen to me then, brethren, while I speak to you of the great secret Jehovah has revealed to his humble servant, that, like the inspired prophet of old, he may deliver Israel from the snare. Your preacher had seen the dwellings of this goodly city sinking in the flames, and there was no arm to save them. One by one the works of man were destroyed, and no man could tell whence the destroyer came, till at length the Lord touched the heart of a poor girl, and she proclaimed the fearful secret, that a plot was formed to burn the city and make her master king over all the slaves. You know that many of these rebels are bound in chains, to await their trial, and they will no doubt meet a well-

merited death; but the true bottom of this plot has not yet been discovered. Do you believe that an ignorant man like Hughson could contrive a scheme like this against ten thousand citizens without the aid of some strong mind? If your credulous souls can indeed receive such folly, then you will nevertheless be undeceived, for the Lord in his great mercy has bestowed upon me a strange vision. I was assured in my own heart that this mystery had not yet been fathomed, and as I meditated in my chamber I heard a voice saying to me, 'Arise, and preserve my people in this city, for the popish priest has done this thing; there will be proof to the people before many days; and if they hear thy warning voice, and do not let him go, the city shall be saved.' When I had heard the voice, I hastened to prepare the people for these glad tidings, and now they are before you all. If there is any man in this assembly who would choose to be on the Lord's side, let him erase his signature immediately from that cursed paper, and he shall find mercy. The words which I have spoken to you are a message from on high, and you would all do well to listen. In

a brief time the evidence from Jehovah will appear in your midst, and when it comes you would serve the Lord in the most acceptable manner if you burned the popish enemy at the stake. I have no more to say to you at this time, except that you hold fast your faith and persevere even unto the end."

As this brief discourse rolled over the vast assembly, they sat as men bewildered as to the preacher's object; but when the plot was mentioned, they bent forward with breathless interest. At length, as the voice of the minister approached the subject of his vision, it sank to a hoarse whisper, yet distinct enough for all to hear, that the great unknown conspirator was the popish priest! A shiver ran through the audience at the fearful name; and when the preacher sank back exhausted with his furious effort many of the signers of the fatal petition trembled from head to foot.

The speaker had accomplished his frightful purpose; for now the petition was annihilated, at least until the perjured informer could disclose her victim to the authorities, and then no petition would be received. The startled congrega-

tion soon broke up and poured forth into the open air; but a short distance from the church they encountered a crowd of men eagerly attentive to one person who was disclosing some matter of great interest. In a few moments the rumor was communicated through the street that Mary Burton had implicated the imprisoned priest as a prime mover in the Negro Plot!

CHAPTER XIII.

The twenty-fifth of June was the day appointed for the marriage of Mary Sidney and Harry Clarke. It had been necessary for the parties to be united the previous day by the legal authority of the Province, in order that their marriage might be recognized by the civil power, but a secret ceremony was to be performed according to the rites of the Catholic Church. Colonel Sidney, who had already become so well acquainted with the secrets of the Catholics, consented, contrary to the anticipations of Mary, to be present at the proscribed worship and marriage of his daughter. At the early hour of three in the morning he stole from his dwelling with Mary and sought the house of Harry Clarke, where Father Raymond was to offer the Sacrifice of the Mass and pronounce the benediction of the Church over the two who were to mingle their joys and sorrows in one common

chalice till death should dissolve their union. There was an unusual interest in the mind of Colonel Sidney as he approached the scene of this Catholic sacrament, for Mary had informed him that no marriage contracted in the Church of her adoption between parties laboring under no previous disability could ever be annulled save by the event of death.

He entered Harry's residence with singular emotions, and receiving the cordial grasp of his young friend's hand was soon conducted by him to the library, which had been hastily arranged for the ceremony, while Mary was taken by Agnes to her room to prepare herself and quiet her trembling heart; for she regarded the previous contract as a mere matter of form which the intolerant government had added to the load of Catholic disabilities. The old grey-haired priest was awaiting the young couple, and arose from his knees as Colonel Sidney entered the library. Harry immediately introduced the two, and then said, "Father Raymond, this is Colonel Sidney, of whom we have spoken so often. He has kindly preserved our secret worship from the government, and, moreover, promised our dear

friend in the prison to exert his influence to admit you in disguise, that you may carry to Father Ury the Blessed Sacrament before he is murdered! You had better improve this opportunity to arrange some plan, for Mary will probably keep you waiting several minutes."

When Harry had left them together, they endeavored to devise some scheme to gain access to the prison without betraying the ecclesiastical character of Father Raymond; but so many difficulties suggested themselves, that before any satisfactory plan was hit upon, they heard the footsteps of the bridal party entering the library, and the Colonel said, hastily, "Come to this place and meet me again as soon as possible, as I intend to take up my residence here."

The bride was leaning upon the arm of Harry as they entered, and the only attendants were Agnes and the Indian girl, the coachman of Harry being engaged in lighting the tapers on the altar, and his wife being severely ill of the small-pox, which still lingered over the city.

How strangely appeared that little altar to Mary, upon whose memory instantly flashed the frightful scene associated with the adjoining

room, when the Holy Sacrifice was disturbed by the ruffian shouts of their persecutors! Then the strange old Church had occasioned feelings of awe, as she stood upon its threshold with the eager curiosity of a child; but now she was conscious of its motherly affection, and the happiness and peace of soul which it inspired, and she threaded its avenues as if it had ever been her cherished home.

When the couple had kneeled before the altar and united in the Mass arranged especially for the occasion of marriage, they listened to the conclusion of the ceremony with sincere gratitude that the Almighty God had made their mutual vows a holy ordinance, and blessed them by granting them the presence of his adorable Son to aid them in their struggle after holiness and heaven. There was a scene of indescribable joy among those outcasts when the married pair arose from their knees to receive the congratulations of their friends, and there was none of that sorrowful parting which usually attends such scenes, for now no friends were given up, but all would be united in one family.

After the warm sympathies of all had been

expressed, Father Raymond prepared to leave the house, for his time was precious, as he had still another Mass to say; and Colonel Sidney leaving his child in her new home, hurried back to his own dwelling, to make arrangements for the disposition of his house and servants.

When Colonel Sidney had found a purchaser for his establishment, and one who was willing to pay a reasonable sum, he started for the house upon the common. On the way he was accosted by one of his acquaintances, who informed him of the deposition which Mary Burton had that morning made against the imprisoned priest, and added, "I think, Sidney, the man will have to die now, for the petition will be laid aside till this charge is investigated; and you know how powerful that girl's testimony is. I believe she will charge half the city before she has done."

"This is abominable!" replied the astonished Colonel; "but are you sure this is not a mere rumor?"

"I was present myself when she appeared before the grand jury," replied the man, "and saw immediately how gratifying her charge was to most of the spectators. You know,

Sidney, the great mass of the people have been anxious from the first arrest of the priest to have him burned, and they say the sermon of Billman yesterday made all the Dissenters furious."

"What has that fiend been doing now?" exclaimed Colonel Sidney; "I have heard nothing of this."

"Why, the minister declared to the people that he was convinced the popish priest was the chief person in arranging the plot, and maintained that John Hughson was incompetent to concoct such a plan; and he succeeded in persuading them that they had given their souls to the devil when they signed the petition to banish the priest. Some of them came to me this morning to have their names erased."

"But is the girl positive in her assertions regarding the prisoner?" inquired the Colonel, unable to realize any conceivable way in which Father Ury could have been connected with the plot.

"Yes; she declares that he was often at her master's house when the negroes talked over the burning of the city and the murder of the people, and makes him out a principal instigator of the

slaves. I would advise you, Sidney, to keep away from the prisoner, or the people will suspect you of being accessory to the affair. It has been already whispered about town that you furnished the priest with the files to enable him to make his escape."

"Well," replied the dauntless old man, "if they expect to intimidate me from performing a work of charity by their malignant insinuations, they will find themselves utterly disappointed; I have faced death too often on the frontier to shrink from it now. Let them discharge their poisoned arrows, aye, and tear away the old soldier's scalp, if they will, and the grey hairs on it will still quiver defiance to their inhuman hearts."

Turning down a side street, the Colonel left the astonished citizen standing as if rooted to the walk, and gazing after his retiring figure as he fancied he heard a trumpet sounding a cavalry charge. Striding on toward the common, the old man was within a few rods of his new home when he suddenly changed his course, and walked in the direction of the prison. A few steps brought him to the main entrance, and he

knocked loudly upon the door. The keeper quickly unlocked it; but when he saw the person of Colonel Sidney waiting for admission, he said, reluctantly, "I am sorry, Colonel, to be obliged to refuse you admittance, but express orders came up this morning to admit no one to the priest without a written permission, and for some reason your name was particularly mentioned."

"This is strange," muttered Colonel Sidney, in a disappointed tone; then bidding the man good-day, he walked slowly toward Clarke's residence. He recollected presently the words of his acquaintance in the street a few minutes before, that suspicion concerning himself had been whispered about the city, and he was confident this rumor had occasioned the refusal of admittance to the prison. The intelligence that Father Ury had indeed been included among the conspirators by the infamous Mary Burton came as a death-blow to his cherished hopes of averting the cruel fate of the prisoner; but with the nobleness of his nature he resolved at the hazard of his reputation, and perhaps his life, to afford the doomed priest the last conso-

lations of his Church. He did not for an instant dream of the charge being falsified, for he knew too well how eagerly the girl's testimony would be received from the romantic tales of her fabrication already adopted as perfectly authentic.

It was unpleasant tidings for a bridal party to hear, but the sooner the information was conveyed to them the better, for every moment would be precious in the arrangement of their plan to bring the priests in contact, if indeed any such scheme could be concocted. Accordingly Colonel Sidney directly informed the family of the annihilation of the petition by this counter-current of implication in the Negro Plot, and that he no longer possessed the confidence of the prison authorities. The whole family saw at once that this was no time to yield to despondency, and though they could entertain no hope that the life of Father Ury would escape the malicious ordeal, (for in those bigoted times the proceeding could not be entitled a legal trial,) yet their incessant efforts and combined ingenuity might afford the dying-priest the last sacraments of the Church, and be to

his noble and affectionate heart a touching testimonial of their fervent love. They deliberated the matter together during the remainder of the day, but no better plan than Father Raymond's former bold assumption of the Rev. James Farley's character suggested itself, and that was impracticable on account of the season requiring only the slightest amount of clothing.

As they were discussing the thousand difficulties to be surmounted, the shades of evening stole upon them, and the quick eye of Cecily, who was standing near the window apparently uninterested in their conversation, caught the figure of the old priest walking leisurely upon the common as if on a pleasure stroll. He passed slowly by the prison as if examining its structure; but, in fact, he was waiting for a person inside the walls; for as the slowly-moving figure of Father Raymond was becoming indistinct in the gathering darkness, the eye of Cecily beheld another person descending the steps of the prison, who immediately joined the priest, and the two walked away together. She was at a loss to conjecture the meaning of this singular meeting, but she felt it must be in

some manner connected with the great object which was under debate at the other extremity of the room. She remained motionless for several minutes at the window, peering forth into the rapidly increasing darkness, till her meditations were interrupted by the direction of her mistress to bring in lights. Scarcely had she performed her new duty and taken her station again by the window, when she was summoned to the outside door by a gentle knock, which she knew to be that of the priest. As soon as she had admitted him, he said to her, in a low tone, "Were you not looking from the window, Cecily, a short time ago, when I was walking slowly before the jail?"

"Yes!" replied the Indian girl, somewhat amazed at his far-sightedness.

"Well, Cecily, I thought it was your figure before the window; but did you see any one else about the common watching me?" he inquired.

"Cecily see nobody watch Father Raymond," she replied, quickly; "Cecily was afraid Father Raymond look too much at the wall, but Cecily see nobody watch him."

"Well, it may have been a mistake," he mut

tered to himself as he entered the room where the family were sitting engaged in earnest conversation.

"We have disagreeable news for you, Raymond," said Colonel Sidney, rising to give the priest his seat; "our hopes are more obscured than when I left you in the morning."

"Do you mean," inquired the priest, "the new charge against Father Ury by Mary Burton? I heard of that in the morning; but I do not think the prisoner is worse off than before, for he would unquestionably have been condemned for breaking jail."

"But all hope of communication with the prisoner is also destroyed," replied the Colonel, "for my influence is gone, and the prison is no more accessible to me."

"Never mind that, Colonel Sidney," replied the priest; "I can gain admittance to the prison now without your aid."

"But how?" exclaimed Harry Clarke, in surprise.

"In this way," replied Father Raymond; "one of the keepers of Father Ury has become so attached to him, that he has promised to

grant him any favor connected with the enjoyment of his religion, before he is executed, which shall not give his prisoner the opportunity of escape. The keeper discovered one day the crucifix of Father Ury which Colonel Sidney had procured for him, and he was so affected by the touching manner in which his prisoner pleaded to be permitted to retain it, that he promised never to disclose to the overseer the discovery, but that he would allow him to keep it to the last moment of his life. He, moreover, made the promise to assist his prisoner in preparing for death according to his religion, if in so doing he did not compromise himself or the safe-keeping of Father Ury, and the prisoner obtained the private interview with a tradesman called Raymond, and the keeper and myself have arranged the whole affair; so, by the help of God, poor Father Ury will receive the Blessed Sacrament before he dies !"

This was a God-send which made the outcast family for a time extremely happy; and when the priest finally left them, the Colonel declared that he believed even the pardon of Father Ury would not have afforded them greater joy.

CHAPTER XIV.

The morning of the twenty-first of the ensuing July was the occasion of thrilling excitement in the provincial city of New York. The grounds in the vicinity of the prison were thronged by immense numbers of people at an early hour, impatiently awaiting the arrival of the Supreme Court. The building which served the purposes of a city prison contained in one wing a room for the meetings of the General Assembly, and in the other wing was the council chamber and the library. The main body of the building on the second floor was occupied by the Supreme Court as the place for holding their sessions. The Assembly had adjourned in June preceding for three months, but before their departure had, with the consent of the Lieutenant Governor and Council, requested the Supreme Court to prolong their existing term until the Negro Plot

was entirely disposed of. The feelings of the crowd were wrought up to the highest pitch, for nearly one hundred and eighty persons had been accused of connection with the plot, and about twenty of this number were white citizens. Many of the slaves had been already tried and condemned, and Hughson, the first white person accused by Mary Burton, had received, some days previous, sentence of death. But the Court were upon this occasion to proceed to the trial of the individual who had received from the pulpit of the Rev. John Billman the title of "chief instigator of the insurrection," and the reverend gentleman's spiritual penetration was to be confirmed by the murderous testimony of the great informer.

Every avenue to the prison was densely crowded, and it was with extreme difficulty the judges forced an entrance to the court room. Colonel Sidney and Harry Clarke had stationed themselves close by the door of the court room quite early in the morning, determined to witness the whole trial, simply that they might gaze upon the countenance of their poor friend once more, for all hope had vanished

from their minds of his acquittal. They knew full well that if the plot did not insure his condemnation, he would speedily be tried under the law against Catholic priests, and his escape from prison could not be controverted.

Harry Clarke's wife and sister were sitting in an upper window of their residence, from which they had a distinct view of the prison and the crowds about the entrance. Cecily had taken her usual position in the adjoining window, and was looking out upon the countless heads clustered about the prison walls; but her ordinary stoicism was gone, and she appeared dejected and miserable. How would the eye of the faithful Indian girl have brightened if the faintest shadow of a hope that her beloved priest would be suffered to live could for a moment be clung to by her wounded heart. But no! she was assured by the fury of those thousands before her, which seemed with difficulty to be suppressed, that an acquittal would probably arouse a frenzy among the people, and they would take the law into their own hands. What fearful emotions agitated those three converts to the Catholic faith as they sat so motionless in the windows,

expecting every moment to hear the announcement that Father Ury was condemned! Occasionally a commotion would be seen about the entrance, and then a rumor that some poor slave had been found guilty would spread over the common, and then, again, that another had been discharged for want of proof. At length, after several hours had thus worn away, the tidings flew over the assembled thousands that the popish priest had been brought on for trial, and there was immediately a simultaneous rush from every part of the common toward the prison. In a few moments there appeared to be some very interesting information conveyed to the crowd without the prison, and Mary said, quickly, "Run, Cecily, across the common, and see what they are talking about so earnestly."

The Indian girl flew down the stairs to obey the command, for she, too, discovered that something unexpected had occurred, and in a few minutes returned with the rumor that the informer's testimony had been objected to by one of the judges in the case of the popish priest. This was a gleam of consolation to the sisters, for Father Ury's death might not be as severe if he

were executed for breaking prison, and not under the charge of Mary Burton as a conspirator. Still the report might be without foundation, and they watched eagerly every motion of the crowd as it swayed to and fro before the entrance.

After watching the crowd for at least an hour, Cecily saw several faces look upward to the second-story window of the prison, whence some one was evidently addressing the people without. She immediately called the attention of her mistress to the fact; but before Mary could speak, a fierce yell of delight was uttered by the persons close under the prison walls. Instantly it was taken up by the congregated thousands, and the fearful shouts of the delighted crowd swelled louder and louder upon the ears of the converts like the exultant yell of fiends. There could be no mistake regarding its awful meaning —Father Ury was condemned!

Agnes looked for an instant wildly in the face of Mary Clarke as every trace of color left her cheek; and then dropping her head upon the shoulder of her friend she moaned as one heart-broken, while Mary shuddered at the increasing

yells and could not remove her eyes from the confused mass about the prison walls, who seemed perfectly frantic with delight at the issue of the trial.

Several minutes elapsed before Colonel Sidney and Harry Clarke could extricate themselves from the crowd and return to the house; and when they at length arrived, they were so affected by the scene they had just witnessed, that they did not speak for several minutes, till Mary, alarmed by the frightful silence which prevailed in the room in contrast with the horrid cries without, exclaimed, "Do speak, Harry, and tell me if Father Ury will indeed be murdered by those men."

"Yes, Mary," he replied, calmly, "the poor martyr is doomed to suffer death by the hand of the common hangman, and that, too, without even the appearance of justice."

"What do you mean, Harry?" inquired his wife, in surprise, "did not that wretched girl prove her charge even to those bigoted men?"

"Oh, yes," he answered bitterly; "any evidence is good against a Catholic; but in this case the witness was so clearly a perjured liar,

that one of the judges could scarcely retain his seat and listen to her. "Why, Mary," he even said to her once—'girl, you are contradicting yourself;' and he would have gone on had not the other judges whispered something in his ear which silenced him immediately."

"And was her evidence then received?" inquired Mary.

"Yes, indeed!" exclaimed Harry; "and though her testimony convicted Father Ury, yet the same charge expressed in the same language by the same witness was deemed totally insufficient to convict Corry; and he was acquitted because he was a Protestant. Well," he added, "the result is the same as if he had been acquitted, for his life was forfeited by his escape from the prison, and that could be easily proved."

"Did he see you and father, Harry?" interrupted Mary.

"Oh, yes," he replied; "and he gave us one of his own beautiful smiles. But, Mary, he was so pale and haggard, my heart bled for him when I remembered the ease and luxury he had given up for God's service! He must have been sick in the dungeon, or else they have been

starving him. But," he added, indignantly, "it is a marvel to me how any one but a fiend could condemn such a noble man without the shadow of proof. I believe the whole story of the plot a base falsehood of that brazen-faced girl."

The reception of evidence from such a witness was an outrage upon the dignity of any court, and had the prisoner been anything beside a Catholic priest, he would have been acquitted without a moment's hesitation. Mary Burton had first testified under oath "that she never saw any white person in company when they talked of burning the town, but her master, her mistress, and Peggy;" yet afterward she deposed that John Ury, a Catholic priest, was often at her master's, and "that when he came to Hughson's, he always went up stairs in the company of Hughson, his wife and daughter, and Peggy, with whom the negroes used to be, at the same time, consulting about the plot; and that the negroes talked in the presence of the said Ury about setting fire to the houses, and killing the white people." * * * * "After this, he again declared on oath, that one Corry, a dancing-master, (also a white person,) used to

come to Hughson's and talked about the plot with the negroes."

Upon evidence of this nature did that bigoted Court pronounce sentence of death against the unfortunate Father Ury, while the same testimony was deemed wholly insufficient to injure the character of the dancing-master, Corry.

There had been discovered a principle of vitality in the Catholic Church, and an amazing success in the propagation of its tenets, which the champions of Protestantism were unable to check or annihilate by their combined forces of intellect and ridicule. Every weapon of the mind was found utterly powerless to prevent the onward sweep of that fearless old Church, which in every age had encountered the most formidable assaults, and ever come forth from the struggle victorious, and, to the utter amazement of the attentive world, with more numerous and resolute defenders than it possessed before the battle. For century after century, even amid its own ranks, enemies and rebels had arisen against its authority, and yet had this veteran defender of the religion of the Cross ever succeeded in suppressing those most dangerous of all foes, intes-

tine divisions; for when persuasion and reasoning had failed, the Catholic Church could fling them all aside, and still point triumphantly to the significant and characteristic title upon its banner—"CATHOLIC." Many in every age deserted its battalions, but each new sect was forced to leave behind its Catholicity. How bitterly did its branded enemies hate it, and how fiercely were the howls of disappointed malice whirled incessantly about its onward and irresistible march! Misrepresentation and open calumny opposed it, while crafty statesmen mingled specious and alluring poisons to enervate its mighty resources; but with her bright eye bent on eternity, and her unfaltering faith glittering upon her brow with the pure sheen of a celestial star, the immaculate Spouse of Christ ever moved serenely on toward Heaven. In every clime beneath the sun, and in every footfall of its progress, had trickled the holy blood of its myriad martyrs; and these pure spirits only left its ranks on earth that they might from the celestial country beckon the old Church on by waving their golden crowns, and pointing to the glistening star upon its forehead those poor

soldiers who struggled and reeled in the fierce battle with the world. What matter was it if the myrmidons of a small province pressed the thorny crown upon the brows of the little Catholic party in the city of New York; were not the promises of the Eternal King to live until the consummation of the world, and would He not maintain the seed of the holy faith scattered upon the soil of the island of Manhattan.

These were the cheering thoughts of the noble sufferer as he rested his wan and haggard cheek against the stone wall of his dungeon and pressed to his lips the symbol of his dying Master. The poor body which had accomplished its utmost labor for the little Catholic flock might soon be led before the howling populace, and be made to writhe in the death-agony, but the soul would only be loosened from its narrow prison and win a long step toward its Maker. Once again before his struggle would the Blessed Sacrament come to his lonely dungeon, and the dismal walls would be forgotten, and the heavy chain hang lightly on the chafed limbs, and holy peace flood the recesses of his loving heart; for the balm of the Christian soldier wounded in

life s contest is a heavenly solace, and in its presence the evils of time appear as blessed foot holds to aid in ascending the mountain whose summit is Heaven.

With these anticipations did Father Ury feel nerved and comforted; and when his tender-hearted keeper came with his evening meal, he wondered to find his noble captive calmly sleeping with his precious crucifix clasped firmly between his hands. "God help you, poor Ury," murmured the jailer, quietly placing his food beside the priest and stealing noiselessly from the cell.

CHAPTER XV.

After the excitement consequent upon the condemnation of Father Ury had to a certain extent subsided, Colonel Sidney resolved to call upon the Lieutenant Governor. He was desirous to obtain permission for little Ursula to visit her uncle in his dungeon before the arrival of the ensuing Friday, when the priest would be led forth to execution. The poor child was so anxious to look once more upon the face of her only relative, that she pleaded incessantly to be taken to the prison; and Colonel Sidney felt assured the authorities could not refuse admittance to so young a child if she went in with the jailer only. Accordingly he sought an interview with George Clarke, Esq., who immediately acceded to his request, and promised to take the child to the prison himself, as he intended to visit the prisoner on the following day. It was arranged between them that the Lieutenant Governor

should call for Ursula in his carriage; and gratified to have been instrumental in affording Father Ury one farewell token of his esteem Colonel Sidney retraced his steps to the common. He found Father Raymond at the house, and learned from him the fortunate termination of the stolen visit of previous night to the cell of the illustrious priest. The compassionate jailer had admitted Father Raymond by a private entrance into the prison, having provided him with the disguise of Arthur Price, one of the persons employed by the magistrates to visit the negroes in their cells and extort confessions from the poor slaves by threats and promises of large rewards. He was seen by the other keepers; but his disguise and attendance upon the guard of Father Ury saved him from any conversation or molestation, and he passed safely into the dungeon of the prisoner. The keeper had promised Father Ury a private interview with the tradesman, so that the priestly character of Father Raymond was undiscovered, while he received the confession of the condemned prisoner and administered to him the Holy Communion. The parting of the two priests was prolonged until

the guard warned them that they must separate immediately or he would be compromised. One farewell embrace, and the two never met again on this side of the grave.

At the appointed time the carriage of the Lieutenant Governor came for the niece of the prisoner, and the beautiful child in a few moments was accompanying the Rev. James Farley and George Clarke, Esq., to the prison. The three were instantly admitted by the overseer, who conducted them to the cell of Father Ury, little Ursula clinging in fear to the hand of the Lieutenant Governor as they descended to the dark cellar of the building. The overseer had brought with him a prison lantern, and its light disclosed the features of her uncle to Ursula, who instantly dropped the hand of her protector and, springing forward, twined her little white arms about Father Ury's neck, and pressed her blooming cheek against the haggard face of the poor man, while her burning tears trickled rapidly down upon his bosom. Then the priest struggled powerfully to cast his arms about the child, but the fetters held them firmly against the wall behind him, and he could only evince

his affection for Ursula by murmuring, "God bless you little Ursula," while the broad chest of the man heaved with the violence of his anguish. Suddenly he exclaimed, "If you had not ome with the child, Mr. Farley, I should feel onfident that this was intended to be a refined mode of torture; it was undoubtedly intended as a kindness, and I thank you for it; but I am far weaker and less resigned to leave this world than I had supposed; God forgive me for it."

"This child was sent here by Colonel Sidney," replied the Lieutenant Governor, "and no doubt it was done in consideration of her being your sole relative; it would be well for you if her presence could move your stubborn nature to confess the fearful part you have acted in this conspiracy."

"Could you swear, sir," inquired the priest, "in the presence of God, that you believe I would not have been acquitted of this charge if I had been a Protestant?"

"You had better acknowledge your agency in this affair," replied the Lieutenant Governor, evasively; "it may moderate your punishment if you evince any indications of sorrow."

"No, sir;" replied the priest, solemnly; "behind all this absurd charge of conspiracy lies the true cause of my death-sentence; and if my soul was perjured by confessing my agency in that which I believe never existed, I should the next day be executed for precisely the same reason which now dooms me to the scaffold. Sir!" he added, while a flush of holy pride lighted his noble features and brightened his clear eye, "I am a Catholic priest—one of the servants of that holy Church which the gates of hell shall never prevail against, and for this I am condemned. I know full well nothing could save me from my enemies but an unusual exertion of divine power, because the Church has ever been, and will ever be, hated by the world. I landed in this Province to watch over the little fold of the faithful, and for this act I must yield up my life. Do not seek any further to annoy me, but leave me to meditation and communion with my Maker till the last moment of my life." Leaning his head upon the shoulder of little Ursula, he said to her, calmly, "Try to live holily, my child, and then you will meet me again; the holy Virgin guard you, Ursula, by her prayers. Re-

member to tell all the Catholics to pray for me, and never forget Christ's poor. Take away the child, gentlemen, and let me die without any more useless solicitations to confess what I know no more of than yourselves."

The two visitors perceived at once that the tone of the priest admitted of no reply, and they immediately led away the reluctant Ursula, and Father Ury was alone once more in the darkness. When their footsteps were heard in the hall above, he bent his head upon his bosom and pressed his lips to the crucifix which was concealed under his garment; for when he had received the additional fetters upon his arms, the considerate keeper placed the cherished symbol beneath his vest, that Father Ury might be conscious of the presence of the likeness of his Friend for whose service he had surrendered every earthly tie. Then composing his mind after this unexpected meeting with little Ursula, he meditated long upon the Five Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, and in his Master's agony forgot his own sufferings.

While Father Ury continued absorbed in his meditation, unmindful of the rays of the setting

sun which streamed through the narrow window of his dungeon, Colonel Sidney was standing with several gentlemen of his acquaintance surveying the ruins of the buildings in Fort George. They were discussing the probability of a sum being received from England sufficient to rebuild the Government House and the barracks, when an officer of the city police presented himself before the party, and very civilly informed Colonel Sidney that he had a warrant for his immediate arrest. The friends of the Colonel demanded in amazement for what the man could arrest such a respected citizen, and the policeman directly exhibited his written authority to seize and confine Colonel Sidney in the prison for alleged conspiracy against the government. "And at whose solicitation was this warrant issued?" inquired one of the gentlemen.

"Mary Burton, sir, made this charge a few hours ago," replied the policeman.

"This is the result of somebody's malice," said Colonel Sidney; "but I must submit, I suppose. I wonder whose turn will come next, gentlemen, among you, for this infamous wretch seems to be absolute queen in this city."

The friends of Colonel Sidney, somewhat alarmed for the old soldier's safety, followed him toward the prison, determined to see him at least well provided for. Some of them being his former comrades in arms, as well as his associates in the last Assembly, would not suffer the old veteran to be led away like a felon to the common jail, but insisted upon the policeman suffering the old man to walk unfettered through the city, and promised to be responsible for his safe arrival at the prison. Nevertheless the people quickly detected that Colonel Sidney was under arrest, and it required the constant entreaties of the old man to prevent being torn away by his old soldiers from the guard of the policeman. There were very many among that gathering multitude who had followed the fearless Colonel in his desperate and successful charges upon the French and Indians on the borders, and when they beheld the white-haired veteran marching away to prison beside a police officer, fierce cries arose from every side of "Shame—shame!" and "Rescue the old hero!"

But the old man paused in his walk, and exclaimed in his clear voice, which had often

spurred them upon the covert of the stealthy foe, "I thank you, my old friends, but you must not interfere with the due course of the laws. I am perfectly innocent of this charge, and hope I shall be able to prove it; but this poor officer is simply discharging his duty in executing the legal warrant from the magistrates, and you must not harm him; they will not convict an old soldier of revolt against a Province which he has fought for so many years; about face—march!" and the white-haired Colonel tramped on toward the prison.

This brief speech partially composed the angry feelings of the crowd, for those to whom it was addressed had been accustomed to obey that decided voice of command; but the old comrades evidently restrained their ardor for a rescue with extreme difficulty, for they vented their indignant feelings in occasional shouts and cheers till they arrived at the prison. The entrance of Colonel Sidney into the main hall of the building resembled rather the triumphal reception of a conqueror than the commitment of one charged with a cold-blooded conspiracy. The overseer himself seemed amazed to receive such a charge, and

provided the old man with the most comfortable cell in the building, and acted as one disgusted with the duty he was obliged to perform. The crowd outside refused to disperse until they had ascertained the location of his room and the old Colonel had appeared at the window and assured them that he was well provided for. Then they scattered away with execrations upon the head of the bold Mary Burton, who had presumed to associate the war-worn soldier with the machinations of negro slaves and popish priests. The audacity of the unscrupulous informer had at length enticed her too far, and at this moment her unexampled career of success in absurd and romantic narrations received its first check. Relying upon the intense hatred of Catholicity in the Province, and the eagerness with which accusations were received against the Catholics, she grasped at the fiendish intimation of the preacher, knowing that the simple suggestion of the priest's name in connection with the plot would insure his condemnation. For half a century had the law existed which doomed the person of a Catholic priest found within the Province to perpetual imprisonment, and the

penalty of escape was death. When, therefore, Mary Burton had made her declaration against Father Ury, it mattered not that she falsified herself, if only she swore stoutly to the fact of his connection with the plot. She knew full well that strenuous efforts were exerted to sustain Protestantism by the cruel arm of intolerance and death, and with the confidence of one who reads too well the page of popular opinion, she maintained two falsehoods before the Supreme Court of New York, under the impression that she was accusing two Catholics. One of these proved to be a Protestant, and was consequently "discharged for want of proof;" but the noble and heroic priest, who had braved death to serve the persecuted of his faith, was consigned to the excutioner. But when confirmed in her career of desolation, she gazed around for another victim, and charged the intrepid Colonel, trusting to his being the father of a Catholic, she ventured too far, and her popularity was instantly on the ebb. The population became alarmed t the ravages her informations were occasioning, and the infamous girl was advised to retire from the arena of judicial investigations with

her hundred pounds reward. But in the mean time the white-haired Colonel paced his cell in hope, while beneath his feet a noble form was murmuring his death-prayers in a damp dungeon, with no hope but an eternal one.

CHAPTER XVI.

The tidings of the arrest of Colonel Sidney reached his daughter late in the evening after her return with her husband from their daily calls upon the suffering poor. When Mary entered the house, she found Agnes complaining of a slight indisposition, and while bathing the head of her friend, Cecily entered with the astounding intelligence that the Colonel had been imprisoned as an accomplice in the Negro Plot. Oh! the deep anguish which pierced the affectionate daughter's heart as she learned that her own noble father was implicated in that frightful plot by the unprincipled Mary Burton. There was no probability that he could escape, for the more upright and respected was the character of the accused the more greedily had the people listened to the charge. She was concious that his intimacy with Father Ury in the prison, and his dwelling with a Catholic family

who had once harbored the priest, would have immense weight against him on the trial; and if the Dissenters should have the majority in the Court, as was generally the case, his condemnation would be inevitable. But Mary was utterly powerless to exert any influence in regard to her father, for when she became one of the proscribed Catholics she relinquished her claim to sympathy and assistance from her former acquaintances, and now the obstacle of her religion prevented even admittance to her father's cell to comfort the old man in his loneliness. Alas! the name of papist was a bitter curse and blight in that unrelenting city; and had not an adequate solace existed in the extended arms of the old faith, it would have been sheer madness to embrace and cherish the title of Catholic among those implacable zealots. But the young wife was daily strengthened before the altar of the immaculate Lamb, and went forth from the holy sacrifice nerved for life's battle, and the acutest anguish always subsided in a few moments when she extended her arms to the Good Shepherd. The sorrow which emanated from the thought of temporal separation quickly merged in that

truly Catholic solicitude for the eternal welfare of her cherished old father, and she longed to know if indeed the Colonel would have grace given him, in answer to her earnest prayers, to murmur one act of faith before the executioner should stop for ever the throbbing of that fearless heart. How would her chalice of earthly bliss run over if she could sit by his side once more, and in anticipation of the fearful death-struggle before him, point his aged eye through the openings she would with God's aid tear asunder in that heavy veil of prejudice and misrepresentation which obscured the honest view of glorious Catholicity radiant with the glories of Christ's Spouse on earth! How would she bless the Eternal Goodness to hear that devoted father exclaim, "Come, faith, and prepare me for the grave, and away, treacherous opinion, who hast almost lost my eternal soul!"

The sudden thought flashed through her mind, that although the prison wall divided them she might still, by some unforeseen and skillful method, convey to the prisoner her written entreaties, and, perchance, by some fortunate expression or idea, direct his soul to the sincere contemplation

of the claims of her Church. She mentioned this thought to the gentle Agnes as she rested her throbbing head upon Mary's bosom, and the zealous convert at once advised her to employ the ever-watchful and adroit Indian girl to concert measures to convey a note to the prisoner. Cecily quietly promised to make the hazardous attempt, and Mary, with the enthusiastic impulse of her nature, was soon prepared to write a letter to her imprisoned father. The invalid calmly restrained any demonstration of suffering while the faithful daughter of Colonel Sidney sat close by her bedside and penned the reflections and desires which her tender soul deemed more precious for her father in his present situation than a thousand caresses of his child. When she had written rapidly for more than an hour, she said to Agnes, "I have said enough to my dear father to recall his memory to the conversations he has so frequently held with me regarding our faith, and now, if the blessed mother of Jesus will intercede for a blessing upon it, we may hope the sincere spirit of reflection and investigation will influence him in his lonely prison, and the priceless gift of faith be his reward.

Here, Cecily, give this letter to father if you can contrive it, and may God bless you."

The Indian girl received it without any reply, and immediately left the room, while Mary endeavored once more to soothe the throbbing temples of her friend. After the two had remained silent several moments, Agnes said, very calmly, "I have a foreboding that I shall live but a very short time, Mary. I do not know why this impression has fixed itself upon me, but for several days the thought has dwelt in my mind, and though I have tried to shake it off by close attention to my duties, I cannot."

"But, my dear Agnes," replied Mary, alarmed by her friend's manner in spite of herself, "we have had so many sorrows and disappointments recently, that they have occasioned this gloomy feeling no doubt, and in a few days Almighty God will give us some alleviation of our miseries."

"No, Mary, you do not understand me," said Agnes; "this is not a gloomy thought for me, for the expectation of death has not terrified me since I became a Catholic, but has been a pleasant reflection; but for awhile the impression seemed so utterly without foundation, that

I feared it might interfere with my duties to reflect upon it; but now, Mary, I believe God designs me to cherish it, and make peculiar preparation for death, for," she added, in a low whisper, "I believe, Mary, that I have taken the small-pox in some of my sick calls!"

Mary Clarke looked fearfully in the beautiful countenance of the invalid, and reading there the confirmation of Agnes' suspicion, exclaimed in anguish, "Oh! my precious Agnes, why did you not mention this before?"

Quickly removing the head of the sufferer from her bosom and placing it on the pillow, Mary prepared those medicines with which she had become so familiar in treating the cases of small-pox among their sick calls. When she had performed this mournful duty of a friend, and summoned Harry to the bedside, Agnes said to him, tenderly, "I am very sick, dear Harry, and probably our Blessed Saviour is now satisfied with my poor life; but however it may be, you must pray for me to-night, and before you retire say the rosary for me with Mary, for I may never hear you repeat it again, Harry."

The two knelt by the bedside of their suffer-

ing sister and recited those beautiful devotions to the Mother of God and the Mysteries of the Passion with an earnestness and pathos which melted the heart of poor Agnes as she faintly murmured the responses; and when they arose from their knees she sobbed aloud. Harry had left the room for a few moments only when Agnes, feeling herself growing worse, requested Mary to send immediately for Father Raymond; and before a half hour had elapsed the faithful priest was beside her. He saw at once the necessity of administering Extreme Unction, for the self-denying girl had refrained so long from exhibiting her illness, that the exertion had accelerated her disease, and she was rapidly growing weaker. When at length he left the sufferer quietly sleeping, it was with the apprehension that he never again would see his favorite spiritual child in life. Mary Clarke watched by the bedside of her friend all night with the tenderness of a fond mother, and when the warm rays of the rising sun fell upon the couch of Agnes still sleeping quietly, Mary indulged the faint hope of her final recovery. At length the pure-souled sleeper opened her eyes upon the forms

of Harry and his wife bending over her, and a beautiful smile cheered their affectionate hearts with a happy anticipation of seeing their devoted sister wear off the malignant disease and return again to their arms. But no! the mandate of her Master had issued from the eternal throne, and the devoted convert had accomplished faithfully the duties designed for her young heart to perform, and she was conscious that her dear friends would soon possess the Catholic mourners' only and precious privilege of evidencing their affection for the departed, the privilege of fervent prayers for her soul's speedy repose in the bosom of God. Slowly and gently the tide of life was ebbing away, and when the beautiful Ursula, unmindful of the contagion, wound her little arm about the neck of her dying protector, and pressed to the lips of Agnes the crucifix which she was too weak to hold alone, the motionless Catholics about her caught the faint tones of the dying girl repeating, "Oh, my God! I most firmly believe in thee, and in all that thou hast revealed to thy holy Catholic Church, because thou art truth itself, who canst neither deceive nor be deceived." Thus the

spirit of the gentle Agnes faded away at the hour of the departing sun, and when the river caught the last rays of beauty from the gilded clouds, another being was launched upon the athomless ocean of eternity. .

At the same hour, unconscious of the death-scene on the other border of the common, Colonel Sidney was sitting by the window of his cell perusing the letter in the handwriting of his child, which one of his acquaintances had brought to him. The Indian girl had discovered the indignation of the people with reference to his arrest, and noticed that there was no opposition on the part of the keepers exhibited toward several of the Colonel's intimate friends who sought admission to his cell. She saw at once that the safest and probably the only mode of conveying her mistress' letter to the prisoner was to intrust it to one of Colonel Sidney's acquaintances with the information that it was from his daughter, and she felt assured the note would pass into the prison without being opened. She had read the spirit of the city correctly, and the letter reached the prisoner through the hands of one of his old comrades without remark.

When he had broken the seal, he read: "My dear father—what can your child say to you on this fearful occasion to console your heart, and to express the deep affection which makes my arms involuntarily extend themselves toward your prison. The bloodhounds are on your track, and I must only sit calmly down and watch their rapid leaps after your honored person, and raise no arm to save your life because I am an outcast papist, and have no more power to aid you than an infant. But the heart will utter its burning language though the hands are firmly bound, and the leagued furies of this city cannot tear from me my love for you, my father, nor crush my fervent prayers for your escape from this foul charge. I pray, oh! how earnestly, that your services for this government, and your untarnished integrity until this fatal day, may effect your speedy discharge, and I may have the precious boon from Almighty God of once more feeling your dear hand upon your daughter's head in your thrilling tones of earnest blessing. But I must tremble for you, my father, when I recall the intolerant mood of these people, who curse every one who extends a kind hand toward

a papist, and I shudder at the facility with which informers earn their gold. They have torn from me the one whose blood courses through my veins, and who alone of my relatives will love the Catholic convert, and perhaps I shall soon be an orphan in this wilderness world; but I must address you, my dear father, to request that which burns my heart, and which, perchance, you will now hear since that frightful death of the stake is almost peering in your face. Will you not, in the silence of your cell, study with prayerful sincerity that wonderful Church which I have grasped so firmly that the most exquisite tortures could not tear me from it? Oh! I could scream with horror when I behold that heavy mass of prejudice and ignorance which clouds your reason and your spirit of inquiry, which you imbibed with your first knowledge of language, and which has grown with your growth till you cannot shake it off without almost the struggle of desperation. Oh! that I could see you once firmly resolve to plunge into this ocean of opinion which envelopes you on every side, and with earnest entreaties to Almighty God buffet the waves of prejudice till

you should penetrate the mysteries of the holy Catholic Church and see if any have forsaken it on sufficient ground. I ought not to wonder that you believe the Catholic Church so corrupt, for I myself felt, thought, and acted precisely as you do now. I, too, would not examine its claims, but received assertions and histories from its enemies without one thought that they might be false. You do not, you will not, ascertain what this immense Church believes, and upon what grounds she believes. You are confident that you are well informed of her history, her doctrines and her practices; but you do not understand one principle of her faith, and your supposed knowledge is a mountain before you, to prevent an examination of her claims and to resist hearing anything from her friends. Would to God I had the tongue of an angel to call to you across this abyss which divides us, and convince you that I am still a free agent, and study each day deeper and deeper the reasons of my faith, and each instant become more firmly persuaded that I am right before the eye of the Eternal! Would I could raise your eyes from the ground and the darkness, and point them to the glorious truths

and ever-blooming fruits of Catholicity; show you that she descended to earth with the dazzling coronet of Heaven, and left an avenue of light in her trail, that her bright eye blazed defiance to oppression, and her hand opened the gate for the emancipation of slaves when the world stood aghast at her presumption; that she first elevated woman from the dust and taught her the glorious destiny God had marked out for her; that she cherished and preserved glorious art and made the beautiful in nature subservient to her one great purpose of making the heart love and adore its Maker. Do not, my dear father, reject her claims because evil men have arisen in her midst, but contemplate the whole structure and her miraculous preservation for centuries in unity of doctrine despite the furious assaults directed against her, and admit that she is the city on the hill whose light is flashed to every corner of the globe, and that your Church is only the dwelling buried from sight in the deep ravine to which the world cannot look. Then examine the principle upon which men have deserted her and tell me if it will not authorize any belief and every belief. May the holy angels watch you,

in whose presence you cannot believe. May the Blessed Virgin intercede for you, whom you will not honor—and may the only Mediator of salvation convince you that his Church is divine, infallible, and eternally the same. God bless you, my dear father.

"Your own affectionate child,

"MARY."

CHAPTER XVII.

The morning of Friday ensuing the arrest of Colonel Sidney was the appointed time for the execution of those condemned under the Negro Plot. So many unfortunate persons were doomed to suffer, that the authorities had directed a body of troops from the fort to be drawn up near the place of execution, to quell any disturbance which might arise among so many excited thousands of spectators. In the centre of the common were erected two scaffolds, so arranged that twenty persons could be executed in a brief period of time, and near them, in a semi-circle, were fourteen heavy posts set firmly in the ground, at which as many as fourteen poor slaves were to be burnt to death. The fagots were piled close beside the stakes, and the whole apparatus of death presented so fearful an appearance, that many shuddered as the number of victims occurred to their minds. Seventy one negroes had already been transported from

the Province, and thirty-two more were to be hung and burnt on this occasion. The only white persons who were doomed to suffer death were John Hughson and Father Ury, who were both to die on the scaffold.

Platforms had been erected, with seats for the Lieutenant Governor, the judges of the Supreme Court, and the magistrates of the city, sufficiently near for them to witness the whole of the revolting tragedy. The station for the clergy of the city was near the criminals, that they might exhort them to confess their guilt even at the last moment of life; and they evidently awaited with anxiety their opportunity of displaying their oratorical abilities. The dignitaries of the city had succeeded in forcing their vehicles through the immense throng to their platforms, and were scarcely seated before the heavy tolling of the distant bell of the English Church announced the commencement of the solemn procession. Its fearful clang made nearly every person in that vast assemblage shudder, and after its first stroke the main door of the prison was flung open, and the policemen of the city, augmented by special con-

stables, appeared descending the steps of the prison in advance of the prisoners. The poor slaves were chained two by two, and were guarded on either side by powerful men drafted for the purpose, and behind them walked Father Ury and Hughson under the especial keeping of two wardens of the prison. Slowly the policemen in advance opened a passage through the crowd, and at every few steps the heavy clang of the bell broke mournfully and solemnly over the city, sending a thrill of terror through the silent thousands, and forcing from the unfortunate negroes cries of agony and fear. The countenance of Hughson exhibited a sullen determination to evince nothing but bitter defiance in his actions at what he regarded as the malice of the magistrates and the crowd, and his expression he retained to the last. Father Ury, on the contrary, appeared serious and thoughtful, occasionally casting his eyes toward the windows across the common as if he hoped to catch a glimpse of some dear face of the Clarke family. He had had no information of the death of Agnes or the imprisonment of Colonel Sidney, for he had been breathing in the silence

of his dungeon prayers for them all before he was led forth to execution.

There were two rooms facing each other across the common, but the inmates would not look forth from the windows to witness the death-struggles of their noble friend; for the Clarke family were praying earnestly that the priest might have the arm of God to sustain him in this frightful hour, and Colonel Sidney was sitting near the door of his cell listening to the solemn clang of the bell which seemed to him to be measuring the life of Father Ury by its regular strokes. At length as the procession neared the scene of the tragedy, the priest seemed to have recollected that his cherished friends would not witness his death-scene from pure regard to himself, for a smile of pleasure broke over his countenance, and he walked more cheerfully up the steps of the scaffold provided for him. With the hope of being able to extort some confession from him, he was proffered the privilege of addressing the people, and promised a respite in his punishment, if he would disclose the whole scheme of burning the city. He immediately intimated that he desired to speak a

few words, and a place was cleared for him on the platform of the magistrates, that he might be better seen by the vast assembly. Unconscious of the symbolical nature of his priestly vestments, they had replaced them on Father Ury in mockery, but they were little aware of the pleasure it afforded him to die in the character of his Master and with the emblem of his Passion resting upon his shoulders. When, therefore, he appeared so conspicuous above the persons gathered on that platform, he obtained perfect silence, while he said, "The magistrates have requested me to address you in the expectation that I will acknowledge my connection with the plot to burn the city. It seems to me incredible that one hundred slaves could concoct so great an undertaking as the murder of ten thousand souls without fire arms, and if these poor wretches have been condemned on no better testimony than that of Mary Burton, their execution will continue a burning shame on the city for years. You all know why her contradictory evidence was received against me and deemed insufficient against Corry—it was on account of my being a Catholic, and a sense of

shame induced you to sentence me to death as a conspirator rather than to convict me of the crime of being found within the Province. Why do you hate the Catholic religion so when your ncestors of England fought and died for this venerable faith? Do you hope to crush it from the face of the earth, and at length see your thousand discordant sects of Protestants prevail? —then will the immutable promises of God fail, and the world be bewildered to find truth. No! you cannot crush it, and I stand before you this day as an evidence that where thousands of my brethren in England and France and Germany and Ireland have fallen before the axe of the executioner, others are willing to take their places and die for the faith. The western borders of your Province are sprinkled with the blood of Catholic priests, and I believe the Almighty God designs their blood some day to be the seed of triumphant Catholicity in this new country. But I must declare in the presence of God and his angels, and of you all, before I suffer death, that I am as innocent and ignorant of this whole plot as an infant. Some have been kind and merciful to the desolate

priest in his confinement, and though I do not see them here to thank them, I bless them according to my humble ability; and I forgive you all for your implacable hatred toward me, as also the witness who falsely accused me. Now I am ready to die in the unwavering faith of a Catholic, and in the confidence of God's mercy."

He would have spoken further, but at this instant his eye caught the figure of the Indian girl, who had forced her way through the crowd till she stood close beside the platform from which Father Ury was addressing the people. She had Ursula in her arms, who stretched forth her little hands to her uncle the moment she discovered his figure above her. For the first time his countenance assumed the expression of anguish, and with a sudden and powerful wrench he tore himself from those who held the end of his chain, and leaped from the stage to the ground beside Cecily. When he disappeared from view, the crowd, supposing he was making an effort to escape, cried, furiously, "Stop the popish villain!" "Down with him!" and rushed up closer to the platform. But Father Ury was only holding the child close to his bosom in one

farewell embrace, while Cecily fell upon her knees and besought him for his blessing, which he instantly gave her. "Oh! how fervently I bless you, poor child of the forest. God keep you for heaven, Cecily; do not let them wrest the faith from my little Ursula."

"They can't, uncle John," exclaimed the child, "while the Blessed Virgin watches Ursula."

At this instant the priest was seized and dragged away through the tumult to his scaffold, where he was compelled to watch the sufferings of the negroes who had been already bound to the stakes. These fourteen poor slaves were uttering fearful shrieks and groans in anticipation of the fierce agony before them, while the dismal clang of the bell rendered the whole scene terrific beyond description. In an instant after the word of command, every pile was fired simultaneously, and the dry fagots in a few seconds were in a blaze, for the interstices of the wood were filled with varieties of combustible materials which spread the flame rapidly in every direction. The poor wretches struggled fiercely to tear themselves from the stakes, while their eyes rolled wildly in their agony, and pierc-

ing screams mingled with piteous cries for mercy broke through the suffocating smoke and penetrated to the ears of the Clarkes as they whispered with white lips their prayers for their poor friend and priest. The old soldier in his cell shuddered, and many a man among those thousands felt the blood leave his face and rush back upon his heart as the yells of agony and the crackling of the flames came fearfully distinct over that silent throng. The sufferers writhed and distorted their bodies as their sinews shrunk and snapped in the fierce heat, and their eyes burst from their sockets while the dense volumes of smoke gradually strangled their utterance as it wreathed itself about their forms and rolled away toward heaven. At length their voices grew fainter and fainter till the last scream was hushed in death and no sound broke the stillness but the crackling of the flames and the occasional stoke of the old English bell. Men looked at each other fearfully as silence settled upon the horrid scene, as if startled to hear no human voice break the strange stillness of the death-tragedy. But in a few moments a single voice broke clear and distinct over that vast

multitude, and every head was bent forward to catch the tremulous tones as they swelled louder and louder each instant in the increasing fervor of the death-prayer. It was the clear voice of Father Ury imploring the Good Shepherd to reveal the light of faith to any of his fellow-sufferers who longed eagerly to be reconciled to the Eternal Son who poured forth the blood of redemption. The dying priest pleaded that the merciful God would in this last hour of their lives make the hearts of some poor slaves as the hearts of little children; that they might earnestly desire the baptism of the Mediator's appointment, and believe in the immaculate offering of the Divine Lamb for the sins of the world; that their desire to be baptized in the name of the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, might satisfy the divine mandate and save their souls.

The solemn voice of Father Ury ceased, and the next instant he stepped quickly forward and suffered the executioner to adjust the rope, murmuring acts of contrition, faith, hope, and charity till the fatal motion was given and he was struggling in his death-agony. For a few

seconds is body quivered violently, and then the illustrious Father Ury was a martyr to his faith. Never more would the eloquent eye glow with the fervor of devotion or the devoted heart and hand administer the holy sacraments of the Church. He had fought the great battle for his Master with his bright eye ever fixed on the golden crown of the martyr, and the last quiver of his body was a pure sacrifice to his God. He abandoned the home of luxury and ease, and yielded up the endearments of friends to live the life of a hunted and friendless outcast, and the Eternal King having in his infinite mercy deemed the trial of his faith sufficient, sent forth the angel of death to loose the fetters of his servant, and inform the noble, fearless, and devoted priest that his arduous commission in the Church militant was ended. Faithfully had Father Ury trod in the footsteps of his Master, and now his noble form was motionless in an ignominious death with the emblem of disgrace upon his shoulder. When life was evidently extinct, the loud voice of the Rev. John Billman was heard exclaiming, in solemn mockery, "So let thy enemies perish, oh, Lord!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

The city slumbered in the arms of a summer midnight. Not a footfall broke the stillness of the deathlike scene, and the stealthy moon peered in the upturned faces of the sleepers as it slowly rose above the eastern windows of the town on its belated journey to the west. While yet its rays gave forth a feeble light, three figures moved noiselessly within the shadows of the buildings toward the direction of the common. They bore upon their shoulders a long, dark object, which they evidently desired to conceal from any observer; for when they reached the projection of the last building adjacent to the common, they paused and examined the open space before them attentively for a few moments. Discovering no moving object in their way, they walked rapidly across the common and entered the dwelling of Harry Clarke with their burden. The figures were Clarke and his

servant assisted by Father Raymond, and their burden was the recovered body of the murdered Father Ury, which they had stealthily disinterred from the spot the magistrates had contemptuously ordered it to be flung. Already had they succeeded in removing the body of Agnes from the public burial-place, after carefully replacing the sods upon the grave to avoid detection; and now the remains of the priest and sister were placed side by side in that room of the house where so often their voices had mingled in life and health, and they had matured their schemes of serving their God and the deserted poor.

The carriage was speedily prepared, and the two martyrs removed from the city to the distant ravine where the sister of the priest had been interred, and in a few moments the bodies of their poor friends were lowered into the already prepared graves by Father Raymond and Harry. How calmly the moonbeams streamed upon their work of love and looked into the resting-places of the sleepers as if in sympathy with the Catholic mourners who appeared sad and pale in the desolate and silent glen! Now the martyred

priest slept quietly beside his long-haired sister, and the gentle Agnes bore them company, with her fair hands folded on her bosom and her Master's work accomplished; and they only waited for the last trumpet-summons of the angel to spring from their graves glorified bodies radiant with the garments of the celestial city and grasping the golden harps of eternal harmony. In other lands, the tombs of the martyrs were the resorts of sceptred princes, and the fairy hand of art had traced the graceful arch above their resting-places; but these poor children of the faith slumbered peacefully at the feet of the silver-haired old priest, and the only light burning above their shrine in the remote ravine was the silver lamp suspended from the blue vault of heaven. Their only requiem was the faint murmur of the forest leaves as their shadows fell quivering upon the lowly graves, while the tremulous prayer of Father Raymond for their soul's repose was whispered in tones of touching sweetness as the angels wafted it to the altar of God.

Devoutly placing the emblem of the Christian faith at the heads of their graves, the priest and

brother left them in their death-sleep and wended their sorrowful way toward the quiet city.

After the lapse of a few days from the death of Father Ury, the charge against Colonel Sidney was abandoned, and the old soldier clasped once more the form of his darling child in his arms, and was happy. The gentle Agnes had been almost as dear to him as Mary, and he mourned her loss as of his own child. Often did the gray-haired Colonel steal quietly from the city to crown the grave of his two friends with blushing flowers, and his aged footsteps at length wore a pathway in the ravine where the outcasts slumbered; for the spot was wild and beautiful, and a holiness seemed attached to it; and when the Colonel grew weary with the unceasing contension of sects and religions, he wandered to the Catholic resting-place, and found strange pleasure there in musing on that unity of faith which joined the empires of the earth to one common head, and made the globe resound each moment with harmonious praise as its eastern revolution brought each instant another altar to the rising sun

At length the graves of the martyrs sank

slowly to the level of the ground, and the swelling city began to approach the distant ravine, and in time covered it with stately dwellings and the haunts of busy men. But the dying word of Father Ury, that the blood of the martyrs would prove the seed of the Catholic Church in this Western country, has already received its fulfilment, and in the paths the martyr trod to the sick and the dying stately temples of the imperishable faith have reared their domes and pinnacles, upon which glitter the precious symbols of redemption, and to which hundreds of thousands in the great city look with Catholic pride and joy. The howls of the enemies of the Church still echo around the fold of the faithful, and with the energy of desperation, those leaders who behold the onward strides of the Church Catholic, struggle to obstruct its glorious career by foul calumnies, and soothe the apprehensions of their followers by never-ending tales of the downfall of Babylon. Statesmen again inculcate lessons of infidelity, and strive to curtail the powers of the Church-almoners; but the invincible legion commissioned by the Divine Teacher can never be crushed while Omnipotence

wields the sceptre of Heaven, and Truth remains the attribute of Christ. Soon will the hammer and the chisel of the workmen echo through the great city beneath which reposes the mouldering relics of Father Ury, and after the incessant toil of years will be seen a temple mounting toward heaven, whose turrrets shall look down upon the highest spires of the city and inspire with awe those who have never witnessed the vast achievements of Catholic faith. A noble pile consecrated to Almighty God will be the appropriate emblem and monument of him who suffered and died for the holy Church, and in his dying speech foretold the triumphs of Catholicity in the State which doomed him to the scaffold and to the exceeding glory of the martyr's crown.

THE END.

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Walworth, M. T.

The mission of death

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